

# THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW



VOL. XLII No. 1 ♦ Winter 2016

## ◆ FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE ◆

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### SYMPOSIUM: HOW GOES THE MOVEMENT FOR LIFE?

Eric Metaxas ♦ Kristan Hawkins ♦ Hadley Arkes ♦ William McGurn  
Clarke Forsythe ♦ Rita L. Marker ♦ Tim Goeglein & Doug Napier ♦ William  
Murchison ♦ Mary Meehan ♦ Wesley J. Smith ♦ Helen Alvaré

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Ellen Wilson Fielding on  
DEMOGRAPHY AND EUROPE'S DESTINY

W. Ross Blackburn on  
THE DESTROYER OF PEACE

James Hitchcock on  
THE DYNAMICS OF POPULAR INTELLECTUAL CHANGE

Joe Bissonnette on  
THE GODLESS SURVIVORS OF ABORTION

Chris Rostenberg on  
NOTES ON CAMPUS INDOCTRINATION

Edward Short on  
ABORTION, EVIL, AND J. K. HUYSMANS

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## ◆ 2015 GREAT DEFENDER OF LIFE DINNER ◆

*Booknotes:* John Grondelski reviews Linda Hirshman's *Sisters in Law*

*Appendices:* Ryan Bomberger • Frederica Mathewes-Green • Robert P. George  
Brantly C. Millegan • Charles Camosy

. . . Here's a note I just received from Professor Donald DeMarco concerning his article in our last issue (Fall 2015):

Dear Anne: I thought you would be pleased to know that someone used "Too Late for Regret" to argue against a euthanasia bill in Concord, NH, recently. She emailed me telling me that she thought my article provided an effective argument. The "Human Life Review" is working around the clock.

Maria (Maffucci, our editor) and I were not only pleased but heartened by Prof. DeMarco's news. As we were a couple of months ago when we heard from John Julius Reel: "I hope you and Maria are well," he wrote in an email,

and that the journal is going strong. Just wanted to let you know that "My Darlings" [HLR Spring 2014] was selected as one of the Notable Essays and Literary Nonfiction of 2014 by the Best American Essays 2015 book this year. I'm glad we all got a little bit of recognition there.

The journal *is* going strong due to the efforts of Prof. DeMarco and Mr. Reel and a host of other contributors, including the larger-than-usual cast we feature in the symposium that leads off this issue: "How Goes the Movement for Life?" (page 5). Our heartfelt thanks to all of them for their wise takes on how the pro-life movement is faring as we head into 2016. (If the Super Bowl debut of a life-affirming Doritos commercial—it enraged NARAL for its "humanizing the fetus" and encouraged pro-lifers for its humanizing the unborn baby—is any indication, we are faring surprisingly well.)

In addition to an impressive roster of articles, this issue also features a fine complement of appendices (pages 83-96). Thanks to our friends at National Review Online and *First Things* for permission to reprint reflections by Frederica Mathewes-Green and Robert P. George. Ryan Bomberger, Brantly C. Millegan, and Charles Camosy, all new to these pages, kindly allowed us to share their commentaries with *Review* readers.

Our annual Great Defender of Life Dinner is another measure of how well we are doing. Once again it was a great success. Here's a note that James McLaughlin, the new Chairman of the Board of the Human Life Foundation, sent to all of us:

Every year I leave the dinner thinking, we will never top this, and every year you do it! It was a fabulous, fabulous night. The choice of speakers was inspired. The NYU FOCUS missionaries and students were over the moon. Many of them are studying theater or film and they were enthralled with Micheal Flaherty. One of them said to me, "This is exactly what I want to do with my life." What a night. You have outdone yourselves. And that young singer who led us in the national anthem was amazing. Congratulations!

You will learn who the "young singer" was in the special section we put together of quotes and photos from the dinner (pages 55-60). Enjoy.

ANNE CONLON  
MANAGING EDITOR



# the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

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## INTRODUCTION

Most of the pro-life leaders and thinkers who we asked to contribute to our symposium “How Goes the Movement for Life?” (starting on page 5) answered by citing the obvious top story of 2015: the release of the undercover Planned Parenthood videos by the Center for Medical Progress. Eric Metaxas sees that, in an “epochal” year for the pro-life movement, “David Daleiden’s undercover citizen-video journalism broke open the ghastly subject of abortion in a way never before done.” Kristan Hawkins writes that the year “will go down in history as a game-changer,” and that the videos prompted her Students for Life to launch the powerful #WomenBetrayed movement. Tim Goeglein and Doug Napier are encouraged that in the year in which “one video changed everything” one of the best results was a “new surge in cooperation among pro-life organizations.” Hadley Arkes reflects on a “new moment” given to those who would restore the penalties stripped from the 2002 Born-Alive Infants Protection Act: In September, the House passed The Born-Alive Survivors of Abortion Protection Act.

Clarke Forsythe notes that 2015 was also the “fifth year since 2011” in which the movement “made significant progress in state legislative sessions” and William Murchison declares it was “a fine year for the unborn” because *New York Times* editors lamented “A Bad Year for Reproductive Rights.” Mary Meehan, however, regrets that the second biggest story was how some pro-life politicians fumbled the opportunity by striking out during congressional hearings with Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards. And 2015 was decidedly a bad year for the fight to stem euthanasia and assisted suicide: Rita Marker describes what led up to Governor Jerry Brown signing assisted suicide into law in California, and Wesley Smith reports that the “already radical euthanasia regimes of Belgium, the Netherlands and suicide clinics in Switzerland grew even more brazen.” For his part, William McGurn finds himself most interested in the underlying issue of how, as a culture, we welcome new life. Babies used to be “regarded as a blessing,” he writes, “it’s hard to imagine our ever getting to a culture of life without underscoring the sheer miracle wrapped up in a baby.” And finally, Helen Alvaré writes about how the *Human Life Review* is faring: “At first glance, it could seem surprising that a journal devoted primarily to the subject matter of abortion would persist for decades.” Yet, she continues, the other side of the story is that a journal that takes on abortion must “take on all of it”—a myriad of subjects—because “You don’t decide that killing human beings is okay without signing off on several dozen other conclusions, deep and shallow, great and small, explicitly or *sub rosa*.”

In a powerful instance of the *Review* taking “on all of it,” senior editor Ellen

Wilson Fielding takes on “Demography and Europe’s Destiny” (page 30). Fielding offers an absorbing historical exploration of the factors which have precipitated “Europe’s demographic death spiral”—the West seems to be “losing its will to live.” She makes the excellent point that, while most “Europeans—like most Americans—know little of their history, and most of what they have been taught is tendentiously anti-Christian,” by the 18th century, what the West was offering itself and the world were philosophies almost totally “untethered” from the “moorings of Europe’s Christian foundation.” Without unity around a “common faith that produced as its fruit an understanding of all human beings as God’s beloved children,” the ground was ripe for the rise of the shameful currents in history—like racism and eugenics—that have paved the way for the West’s current “self-loathing” and a “growing denial of human exceptionalism.”

**R**everend W. Ross Blackburn would agree with Fielding that rejecting foundational Judeo-Christian values has serious repercussions on all strata of society, especially when we fail to understand that legal abortion has a powerful effect on the health of our nation. Abortion, he argues in “The Destroyer of Peace” (page 41), rather than being a “single issue,” is in reality a *singular* issue, one that is connected to everything else. “The Old Testament proclaims that the shedding of innocent blood is never a single issue,” he writes, recalling that Blessed Mother Teresa declared abortion the “greatest destroyer of peace” because “it is a war against the child.” How did the grave sin of abortion evolve into a largely accepted “right” necessary for women? In “The Dynamics of Popular Intellectual Change” (page 45) contributor James Hitchcock takes us through the “predictable process” society goes through when ideas once thought shocking and held by only a few become gradually tolerated, and then espoused. Those who remain opposed are labeled “oppressive,” and become reluctant to speak “confidently and boldly” about their beliefs. The pro-life movement has nonetheless “endured above all because it has never lost sight of its moral foundations . . . but insists on a transcendent truth . . .” One might add that some young pro-life activists are now seen as a radical minority, because the majority of their generation accept abortion as the norm. In our next article, Joe Bissonnette looks at exactly that, the generations born since 1973 (“The Godless Survivors of Abortion,” page 51). He argues that there is “an intrinsic psychological insecurity” affecting all of those born since *Roe*, meaning that “more than half of Americans today are living in the shadow of an existential doubt.”

We turn next to a special section on our annual Great Defender of Life dinner, with honorees NY State Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz and film producer Micheal Flaherty. Our friend Reverend John McCartney published a delightful write-up of the evening, which we reprint here. It truly was inspiring and a grace for us to honor those who stand up for life in politics and the culture. Doing so can take a lot of courage and perseverance, especially for the young, who are often, as our next author illustrates, inundated with pro-choice propaganda. Chris Rostenberg writes in “Notes on Campus Indoctrination” (page 61) that the “pro-choice position [is]

## INTRODUCTION

simply beyond debate, unworthy of questioning.” He offers much valuable advice to students who want to bring back respectful debate about “the defining moral issue of our day.”

Our final article is a literary critique. Edward Short delves into the life and work of J. K. Huysmans, a nineteenth-century French novelist whose portrayal of evil in his characters offers a terrifying glimpse into the “nihilistic logic” that also drives, Short asserts, the ghoulish abortionists and baby-parts-sellers we have been reading about in our contemporary news. And in Booknotes, John Grondelski reviews *Sisters in Law: How Sandra Day O’Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the Supreme Court and Changed the World*. The author, Linda Hirshman, might well be out of the pages of Rostenberg’s essay: While she purports to be interested in how the two female Justices advanced “women’s issues,” it is “clear from the work as a whole,” writes Grondelski, “that the litmus test of ‘women’s rights’ is absolute fealty to unrestricted abortion.”

In one week in January we marked the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the 43rd anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision. In Appendix A, Ryan Bomberger writes that he is “grateful, beyond words, for King’s tireless efforts to elevate humanity,” but King’s reported early support for Planned Parenthood, “the nation’s number one killer of African Americans,” was wrong. Frederica Mathewes-Green’s powerful essay, “When Abortion Suddenly Stopped Making Sense” (Appendix B), is a reflection on the *Roe* anniversary, as is Robert George’s “Forty-Three Years After *Roe*, Hope is Alive” (Appendix C). George is inspired by the young people “flooding into the movement.” Some of them hit the national news when students traveling back from the March for Life in Washington, D.C., were among hundreds stranded on the Pennsylvania Turnpike in the mega blizzard Jonas—for 22 hours! Brantly C. Millegan (Appendix D) tells the story of the Turnpike Mass (complete with snow altar) through his interview with the main celebrant, Father Patrick Behm. Finally, in Appendix E, Professor Charles Camosy points out that “after six debates, moderators haven’t asked the Democrats even a single question about abortion,” even though abortion is the issue that has most “passionately divided Americans over the last four years.” Since about “21 million Democrats register as pro-life,” he writes, “that Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders have not been confronted on their extremism on abortion is a very serious abdication of journalistic responsibility.” Amen to that, and thanks, as always, to Nick Downes for his mischievous cartoons.

MARIA MCFADDEN MAFFUCCI  
EDITOR

# Symposium: How Goes the Movement for Life?

*Eric Metaxas*

The year 2015 was an epochal one for the pro-life movement. David Daleiden's undercover citizen-video journalism broke open the ghastly subject of abortion in a way never before done. The horror of Planned Parenthood in particular was revealed to the public with unprecedented force, helping people to see what hitherto they were so easily able to avoid and ignore due to the pro-abortion bias of the mainstream media and Democratic Party. These videos, coupled with advances in science and ultrasound-imaging technology, have made it impossible for them to continue to believe the raft of pro-abortion lies about the unborn child being a "blob" or a "mass of cells." For the first time, Americans are becoming aware of what their lawmakers have wrought; the macabre story of Kermit Gosnell, too, has helped many see what they never dreamt was happening in their country—often funded by their own tax dollars.

As someone familiar with William Wilberforce's hard-fought campaign to end the slave trade, I see the stark similarities in these battles. In Great Britain, the slave trade had been able to keep out of sight of the average British citizen. The ships sailed from English harbors to West Africa to pick up their human cargo, transporting them under the most horrific conditions across the Atlantic to the West Indies, where all of the sugar plantations were located. When the ships returned to England, it was with rum and molasses and raw sugar onboard, so that the extraordinary evil of the trade was entirely hidden from English eyes. But Wilberforce changed all that. He knew that if he could only tell the stories and put the images and facts in the minds of average people, most of them would recognize the slave trade for the moral horror it was and vote against it, despite the fact that it supported their economy. And he was correct. Though the battle was long, he knew that revealing the facts—though itself difficult—would be worth the trouble. In the end, the people of Britain turned against the slave trade and history was forever changed.

The parallels with the abortion battle are striking. Via Daleiden's videos—and Carly Fiorina's heroic reference to them in one of the earlier GOP debates—the subject was brought to the fore of American life; millions have become acquainted with the facts and the truth behind the curtain put up by Planned Parenthood and NARAL and others who know that these revelations will end their cultural sway. We must keep pushing the facts and stories out there, trusting that the average American, and even many vocally "pro-choice"

Americans, will see that they have bought a lie, and will in the end stand against what anyone open to the truth must see—that abortion is something we must stand against. We must push without being pushy and must speak the truth boldly, but in love, trusting that if we do so, the facts and the truth will speak for themselves to those who are open to hearing the truth. We must do what Wilberforce did: We must not be moralists and grandstanders, but must humbly own our own part in this awful story, and must offer forgiveness and grace along with the hard truth. This is God’s battle, not ours, and it is our honor and privilege to play a small part in it, to His glory.

—*Eric Metaxas, the New York Times bestselling author of Bonhoeffer and Amazing Grace, hosts The Eric Metaxas Show, a syndicated radio program heard in over 120 cities in the U.S.*

### ***Kristan Hawkins***

We got word that something big was going to happen in mid-July but we didn’t know how big, and, frankly, I was skeptical. At times, as pro-lifers, we think that some event or rally or protest or court case is going to be huge and groundbreaking and something that the nation has to pay attention to; but it ends up being a blip on the radar, if that. This time, I was wrong to be skeptical.

When the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) released its first video, in which abortionist Dr. Deborah Nucatola blithely talks about selling the body parts of aborted babies, our entire organization at Students for Life of America was upended—in a good way—and we knew that this was the year the nation would be forced to look at what goes on behind closed doors at America’s largest abortion chain, Planned Parenthood.

When Planned Parenthood’s president Cecile Richards issued a video response just days after the first CMP release—apologizing for the “tone” of the abortionist caught on tape—without a doubt we knew that 2015 was the year that would go down in history as a game-changer and we were prepared to be on the forefront of the fight.

Students for Life is a small organization but we have a large reach throughout the pro-life community because we work with over 930 pro-life groups on college and high-school campuses, who in turn work with their local pro-life community leaders and pregnancy resource centers. We foster relationships both on the local and national level; we knew we had to leverage the CMP videos immediately and try to reach as many people as possible with a message about them.

But what message and who did we want to reach?

Pro-lifers have been claiming for years that the abortion industry sells

fetal tissue. Nearly a decade ago, there was a news show about it; some pro-lifers even produced business forms that showed how much certain baby body parts were worth. But it remained a fruitless endeavor and pro-lifers never got any traction. Then, 26-year-old David Daleiden created a company that purported to buy fetal tissue and infiltrated the abortion industry for nearly three years, obtaining hundreds of hours of undercover footage of abortionists callously negotiating the price of baby body parts. He was even able to film inside the “products of conception” lab where abortionists held the tiny, distinguishable parts of babies they had just aborted.

Again, pro-lifers had known this was happening but they couldn't prove it till now. This time it was different: It wasn't pro-lifers talking about selling baby body parts—it was Planned Parenthood's own executives. It wasn't pro-lifers holding grisly photos of aborted babies—it was Planned Parenthood's own abortionists holding tiny legs and hands of those babies.

So it wasn't pro-lifers we needed to reach. We needed to reach Planned Parenthood's clientele, the women considering abortion, the men pushing them into the facilities, the families of women facing unplanned pregnancies. They all needed to know that Planned Parenthood would put a price tag on women as soon as they walked through a clinic door. They needed to know that Planned Parenthood was, in some cases, illegally altering abortion procedures, putting the mother at greater risk of complications, just so they could obtain “intact” baby body parts to sell. They needed to know that Planned Parenthood couldn't care less about their safety, their health, or their rights—all the organization cared about was its bottom line and it would do whatever it took to bolster it.

Ultimately, Planned Parenthood's clientele needed to know that the nation's largest abortion provider was betraying women and their families; it was breaking the trust that patients placed in it every day.

And so was born the #WomenBetrayed movement. Students for Life of America worked with every contact we had to coordinate a national rally day to take place just 10 days after the first CMP video was released. We were hoping for maybe 10 or 15 events but ended up having rallies in close to 80 cities, and in nearly every major media market, including Washington, DC, where we had presidential candidates take to the podium and pledge to defund Planned Parenthood if elected. Just that one day amounted to nearly \$10 million in earned media coverage—the most the pro-life movement has ever had on one day.

We hope Cecile Richards was watching the coverage. We hope that she and her expensive PR firm were up at night trying to figure out how to counter our message. They had nothing to fall back on. Their only line of defense

was that the CMP videos were “highly edited,” which their own analysis suggested was not probable and another, independent, forensic analysis deemed incorrect—the videos are 100 percent authentic.

Then, in the fall, Cecile Richards was called in front of Congress to testify about her organization. She admitted that 86 percent of Planned Parenthood’s non-government revenue came from abortion. She also admitted that the organization does not do mammograms—a deception that she and her allies, including President Obama, have been perpetrating for years.

Three House committees are now investigating Planned Parenthood; a select panel has been formed solely to investigate the organization. Dozens of states are also investigating, and governors have since pulled funding from the organization. Planned Parenthood, which is engaged in costly litigation, has also announced plans to spend \$20 million in 2016 to elect a president it can trust (aka Hillary Clinton).

In late fall, the U.S. Senate actually passed a bill that cut nearly 90 percent of Planned Parenthood’s federal funding through a process called reconciliation. It was the first time that the Senate had ever voted to defund Planned Parenthood. While President Obama is all but guaranteed to veto the bill, Planned Parenthood should be shaking in its boots, because the key to unlocking its federal funding has been found. If this nation elects a pro-life president, pro-life leaders in Congress will use the reconciliation process again to pass a bill that defunds the country’s abortion giant and redirects that money to federally funded healthcare centers that do everything Planned Parenthood does—except abortion.

The presidential election of 2016 cannot be more crucial. Voting pro-life first is going to be key to maintaining the momentum of the pro-life movement as we continue to show the country that Planned Parenthood is a disreputable organization that betrays the very women it claims to empower and support.

The secret is out, and as a pro-lifer, I can’t wait to see what happens in 2016.

—*Kristan Hawkins is president of Students for Life of America.*

### ***Hadley Arkes***

2015 saw the House take up our move to restore penalties that had been stripped from the original Born-Alive Infants’ Protection Act in order to avert a veto from Bill Clinton (though by the time the bill was passed Clinton was no longer president). We thought it would take all of Jerry Nadler’s arts to keep the Democrats from voting against the bill *this* time—just as it had taken all of his arts to persuade them not embarrass the party by voting against

it back in 2002. But Obama ran true to form: He announced that he would veto the bill—as he had acted, as a state senator in Illinois, to kill a bill that would extend the protection of the law to children who survived late-term abortions. He had been willing to take that radical stand even as Democrats in Congress backed away, in prudence, from voting against the federal version of the same bill. The federal bill passed by voice vote in 2002, with no dissenting Democratic vote. Now, in 2015, Congress was faced with the latest iteration of that bill: a move to add serious penalties for engaging in that killing. And therein lies a story.

Readers of the *Human Life Review* probably know that the Born-Alive Infants' Protection Act was my bill; that it sprang from a draft I wrote for the first George Bush in 1988. It was the “most modest first step” in legislating on abortion, to protect the child who survived abortion, and plant premises in the law: Even the child marked for abortion had a claim to the protection of the law. And from that point we would ask what was different about that same child five minutes earlier, and then five days, five months before birth.

The bill was finally introduced in 2001 and enacted in 2002. But it was a pure teaching bill; the penalties had never been restored, and without those penalties, it became virtually impossible to enforce.

In the meantime, we came to learn that this kind of killing occurred far more often, in far larger numbers than even we had known at the time. Jill Stanek, a brave nurse in Illinois, had blown the whistle on the “live-birth abortion”—delivering the child alive and then putting it in a Refuse Room, uncovered, to die. As she went on the radio for interviews, we heard from nurses in other parts of the country that those “procedures” had been practiced in their hospitals for years.

Then came the killings in Kermit Gosnell's abattoir in Philadelphia. The country was alerted now, as never before, to the fact that children were killed in brutal ways when they survived abortions.

That gave us the new moment. And so a year ago, in September, I invited a group of accomplished friends in Washington to form a Working Group to restore the penalties that had been stripped from the Act. The group included my former student, Paula Stannard, who had been deputy general counsel of Health and Human Services under George W. Bush, Ed Whelan of the Ethics & Public Policy Center, Mary Harned and Bill Saunders from Americans United for Life, pro-life veterans Bill Wichterman and Chuck Donovan, and the activist Star Parker.

Trent Franks (R-Arizona), Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution in the House, invited us to provide the draft for the new legislation. The Democrats had voted earlier to forbid these killings, and so

we would ask: What do you think is the appropriate punishment for killing a child who survived an abortion? Our own draft contained stiff civil penalties, hefty fines for the doctors and their aides who performed these surgeries, and the hospitals and clinics that permitted them. But as convictions kindled on this issue, our friends on the Judiciary Committee were moved to add criminal penalties, with time in jail.

Suddenly with the whirl on Capitol Hill, the Judiciary Committee saw the chance to enact our bill now, as a pro-life measure likely to pass. Chairman Franks reached out for our bill, and with a few changes he introduced it on the floor, with an eloquent appeal. The bill was renamed (with a string of nouns as adjectives) “The Born-Alive Survivors of Abortion Protection Act.”

The announcement came from the White House on September 16 that Obama would veto the bill. I guess we should not have been surprised, given his audacity in opposing the same measure in Illinois. Still, he had sought in 2008 to cast up fog to suggest that there was something different about that bill in Illinois. Even he didn’t want to declare so emphatically at the time his willingness to accept the killing of children born alive if that were necessary to fend off even the most modest attempts to scale back that “right to abortion.” It struck me that there were grounds of hope that, when he was faced starkly with the issue by Congress, he would back away and sign the bill, as though it made no momentous difference. But he was freer now to act out his character, even with the risk of damage to his party. And yet such was the state of the Democratic Party now that the Democrats in Congress suffered no qualms in following their leader. With only a handful of pro-life Democrats still remaining in the cause, the Democrats acted in mass as though they were now emancipated for the first time to be their true selves. No more need to dissemble. And so, on September 18, 177 Democrats voted against the move to provide real penalties, civil and criminal, to surgeons who kill children born alive. And, of course, not a single Republican voted against it.

We will have pro-lifers grumbling about the Republicans—as I do about the two George Bushes—and yet can one really refuse to recognize the deep, plain, striking division between our parties on this issue? One would seek to restrain and reduce abortions, and even seek the overturning of that doctrine that there is a “right” to take innocent life for the sake of one’s own self-interest. And the other looks upon abortion, not merely as a legitimate private choice, but as a deep public good, which deserves to be promoted and enlarged at every turn, with public funds and with the levers of the law.

—*Hadley Arkes is Edward N. Ney Professor in American Institutions, Emeritus, at Amherst College and Founding Director of the James Wilson Institute in Washington D.C.*

*William McGurn*

How did the pro-life movement fare in 2015? The short answer is, I have no clue. The longer answer is, it depends on what you mean by “fare.”

If what we mean by “fare” is, how well did the pro-life cause do politically, I would yield to the judgment of folks such as Clarke Forsythe of Americans United for Life, who follow pro-life issues across all 50 states.

But the measurement that I am most interested in is more social and cultural than it is political and legal. Back when I was writing speeches for President George W. Bush, he liked to express his goal on abortion this way: An America where every child was welcomed in life and protected in law. It strikes me as the perfect summary of what we are working for.

Most of the time, we are working on the law side. And there’s nothing wrong with that. From chipping away at the outrage that is *Roe v. Wade* (and its ugly progeny, *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*) to imposing restrictions on late-term abortions and now working to defund Planned Parenthood, we’ve had a number of solid victories. There will be more to come, and they all have important human consequences.

But as my hair whitens and I look at college-age daughters who will someday be mothers themselves, I find myself more drawn to the “welcomed in life” part of the credo. In the family I grew up in, and in the family my wife grew up in, babies were regarded as a blessing. It wasn’t even taught: It was lived. It is a wondrous thing to have. The welcome was real and from the heart.

In addition, all three of my daughters are adopted from China—a place where it was thought in the nation’s interest that families be limited to only one welcome. This is a very sad thing. And when I look into my girls’ faces, I try to remember three women somewhere in China who made a decision for life that leaves me with a debt I simply cannot pay in this world.

For my daughters, and for millions just like them, it’s a different challenge. For the promise of abortion is as old as the ages: sex without consequences. Today, because of technology, there is a further allure: No one ever need know. If you make a mistake and find yourself with an unwanted life growing in your womb, you can get rid of it, and nobody—except you and God—will be the wiser.

It doesn’t help that when women find themselves in this position, they have often been abandoned by the father and are either too afraid to tell their families or have no family to lean on. That is about as alone as someone can get.

Recently on Facebook an acquaintance of mine posted a story about a young female attorney who wrote about finding herself pregnant at perhaps the most inopportune moment of her career. Her point was that often pro-lifers

think of women with unplanned pregnancies as uneducated teenagers, but, life being what it is, plenty of upwardly mobile professional women will inevitably find themselves in the same fix she did. Without sugarcoating, she ended by relating her decision to keep her son, the joy he brings to her life—and the kind of support that means a great deal to a mom raising her child on her own.

It's a familiar story. Less familiar to me were the many hostile comments her story evoked from other women who made clear they regarded an unplanned pregnancy as an "alien" come to occupy its mother's body. Others spoke of what they would do if they discovered the life inside them suffered, say, a "chromosomal abnormality." So much for respecting the choices women make. It was cold and brutal—but it is how real people in the real world speak.

Against these comments, other women, mostly moms, had pointed to the joy and miracle of life. But it must be said: Their words did not persuade.

And that, my friends, seems to me the state of the pro-life movement, not only for today but for all time. Certainly we need to underscore the sheer beauty of the welcome. It is well to address the hard realities of single parenthood, or any kind of parenthood for that matter, but it's hard to imagine our ever getting to a culture of life without underscoring the sheer miracle wrapped up in a baby.

We will not always persuade those who regard a fetus as expendable. But as I read those Facebook posts from mothers trying so hard to counter what one called "the sad view of a miraculous event," it struck me that this is what it's all about: making the case when the circumstances are least opportune, when the opponent appears implacable, and when we are frustrated by what we perceive as the galactic inadequacy of our own words.

Because I don't believe the rejections we receive are the final word. I have read enough articles by women who regret their abortions who said "if even one person had spoken up," to know that it matters, and matters most when we least expect. So long as we have people willing to make the case even if they know they are on the losing side—perhaps especially when they are on the losing side—I'd say we're faring better than we know.

—*William McGurn is a Vice President of News Corp and the Main Street columnist for The Wall Street Journal.*

### ***Clarke Forsythe***

2015 was the fifth year since 2011 in which the pro-life movement made considerable progress in state legislative sessions. This was the result of three principal factors: (1) the state-based legislative strategy the movement

has pursued since Americans United for Life's 1984 Conference on "Reversing *Roe v. Wade* Through the Courts," (2) the Supreme Court's 2007 decision in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, which gave greater deference to the states to enact legislation to protect unborn children and women, and (3) the 2010 midterm elections, which brought in 600 state legislators who tend to vote pro-life, and the 2014 midterm elections, which brought in 200 more.

One fruitful point of comparison for the movement is 1992, when the Supreme Court reaffirmed *Roe v. Wade* in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, and voters elected Bill Clinton. In an op-ed in the *Washington Post* on December 4 of that year, Charles Krauthammer pronounced "the great abortion debate is over." Pro-lifers had lost, and the movement, he wrote, was relegated to "changing hearts and minds."

Twenty-three years later, the abortion "issue" is not the abortion "issue" of the 1970s or the 1980s, both decades having been marked by a hostile Supreme Court, a more uncertain public opinion, and constraints on legislative action that have since been partially lifted. Leadership, perseverance, a well-formed strategy, and focused action have resulted in significant progress. With the gains made by the movement in recent years, abortion advocates—and conservative commentators like Charles Krauthammer—have admitted that the pro-life movement is winning.

Consider one example of persistent legislative effort, year by year since the 1980s: fetal homicide laws. In 1973 they were enforced in only 5 or 6 states; today, they are enforced in 39 states. (There are also prenatal injury laws in 50 states and wrongful death laws that protect the unborn child in 38 states.)

In July 2015, after years of efforts to defund Planned Parenthood (PP), undercover videos by David Daleiden and the Center for Medical Progress exposing the abortion giant's disreputable practices burst on the scene. The videos and their rollout have been brilliant. But they gained traction in 2015 that they wouldn't have had, say, in 1979, because media opportunities have improved and political leadership in the states and in the U.S. House and Senate have given them much attention.

The videos have been important for two major reasons. They have communicated to more Americans that Planned Parenthood *is an abortion provider*—something that many simply didn't know before. And they have educated them about the fetal-tissue business made possible by abortion—severed hearts, arms, and legs, which are being harvested and sold. Indeed, in July 2015, for perhaps the first time, the *Wall Street Journal* recognized in a lead editorial that Planned Parenthood is "the *largest* abortion provider in the U.S." The videos have brought Congress closer to defunding Planned

Parenthood than at any time since 1970, when the National Family Planning Act (NFPA) was enacted. And the disturbing issue of fetal-tissue harvesting, newly spotlighted by the videos, will be addressed in state legislatures in 2016 with new laws (like AUL's Unborn Infants Dignity Act).

Were the videos successful? By January 6, 2016, both the Senate and the House had voted to defund Planned Parenthood. A Select Committee on Infant Lives continues to investigate the organization's fetal-tissue harvesting and sale. The videos have spurred efforts to defund Planned Parenthood in the *states* and have laid the foundation for defunding *after we get a new president in January 2017*. Success will also be measured in additional limits on abortion, bans on fetal-tissue harvesting, and other protections for unborn life that we may see enacted in coming years.

The success of Daleiden's Planned Parenthood videos should *not* be measured in terms of whether or not they resulted in a "federal government shutdown." That's a distraction because (1) a "federal government shutdown" is not possible with President Obama in office; (2) a shutdown is not a measure of *pro-life* success; and (3) it is an objective that few understand, because it is subject to broad exceptions by law. Also, the President can arbitrarily exploit a "shutdown" by politically-selective funding cuts. Neither should the success of these videos be determined by whether or not their airing resulted in *immediate defunding*: President Obama holds the veto pen and he is as resolutely committed to Planned Parenthood's ideology and funding as he is to any other aspect of his "legacy."

On the broader front, the 23 years since the *Casey* decision have produced mounting evidence that *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* are collapsing—both from inherent defects in the Court's abortion doctrine and from its ill-advised, self-appointed role as the country's National Abortion Control Board. *Roe* is clearly unsettled due to persistent political and legislative opposition. Its original rationale has been abandoned by judges and scholars, which is strong evidence that it was wrongly decided. The Justices have been ineffective as a Control Board, leaving a trail of substandard providers and substandard conditions in clinics from coast to coast. The Justices' assumptions in 1973—based on no reliable data or evidence in the case record—were wildly wrong and have been consistently and increasingly contradicted. The medical profession—rank-and-file physicians—has largely abandoned the abortion industry. The number of providers has declined, and the annual number of abortions, according to the CDC, has declined seven straight years since 2008.

Political and judicial obstacles will continue to influence the rate of future progress. By the time of the next presidential inauguration, on January 20,

2017, four Supreme Court justices will be 80 or on the verge of 80. Hence the president elected in 2016 will, for better or worse, likely influence the Court *for the next quarter century*. Four more pro-abortion justices like Ruth Ginsburg would not be able to overturn pro-life legislative gains in the states completely, but they might effectively impose a political and legislative *stalemate* for decades.

So we end 2015 with a paradox: No one could have predicted, at the time of President Obama's inauguration in January 2009, the strength of the pro-life movement after seven years of his presidency. And yet that progress may be significantly blunted, if not reversed, by the prospect of a President Hillary Clinton appointing several pro-abortion justices to the Supreme Court. With the Court now hanging on a 4-1-4 balance, *all* political frustration on the part of every pro-life American should be focused on the November 2016 elections.

—*Clarke D. Forsythe is Senior Counsel at Americans United for Life and the author of numerous publications, including Abuse of Discretion: The Inside Story of Roe v. Wade (Encounter Books 2013).*

### ***Rita L. Marker***

Oregon legalized doctor-prescribed suicide in 1994.<sup>1</sup> Since then, state after state has rejected similar assisted-suicide measures, some multiple times. In fact, since January 1994, there have been more than 175 such proposals in over 35 states.<sup>2</sup>

Up until 2015, only two additional states—Washington and Vermont<sup>3</sup>—had joined Oregon as jurisdictions that permitted doctor-prescribed suicide.<sup>4</sup>

But as 2015 began, proponents of assisted suicide were riding a wave of publicity over the death of a young woman who took a deadly overdose of barbiturates prescribed under Oregon's "Death with Dignity Act." Twenty-nine-year-old Brittany Maynard, a brain-cancer patient who had moved from California to Oregon for the specific purpose of qualifying for death under Oregon's law, had been the subject of a sympathetic cover story in *People* magazine. Following her assisted-suicide death, her husband, now a paid staff member of Compassion and Choices (formerly called the Hemlock Society), became spokesperson-in-chief, advocating passage of Oregon-style laws with a special emphasis on California.

During 2015, laws to give a doctor the right to prescribe drugs for the specific purpose of causing a patient's death were proposed in 25 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>5</sup> Advocates of assisted suicide were banking on the Brittany Maynard story to catapult them to success.

In state after state the measures failed or were postponed. However, on September 11, 2015, California lawmakers passed the “End of Life Option Act,” after remarkable gyrations to bring it to a vote in a special session.

The bill had originally died in the Assembly Health Committee in July. According to legislative rules, the two-year bill could be heard again, but not until January 2016—or so most people thought. But its sponsors had another plan.

Because the state’s Medi-Cal (Medicaid) program was facing a billion-dollar shortfall, Governor Jerry Brown called a special session specifically to pass legislation to fund the Medi-Cal program. The assisted-suicide bill’s sponsors jumped on the opportunity to introduce it again, even though it was not on the subject for which the special session was called. This provided a perfect opportunity for the sponsors to circumvent many of the regular session requirements. Even more important was the fact that the special session Assembly Health Committee would be smaller and hand-picked, allowing the removal of legislators who had opposed the measure weeks earlier during the regular session. With the stumbling block of the earlier configured Assembly Health Committee out of the way, the bill passed the new committee and went to the full Assembly, where it passed. It then went to the Senate, whose leadership, which included the bill’s sponsors, waived any committee hearings and sent the bill straight to the floor—it passed in a final vote on September 11.

On October 5, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown signed it into law.

For almost 20 years, beginning in 1995, bill after bill had been introduced in California and failed. In 2015, however, the crime of assisted suicide was transformed into a “medical treatment,” largely due to Compassion and Choices’ hefty war chest and its promotional use of Brittany Maynard and her family.

That new law will take effect 90 days after the end of the special session, which could occur as late as November 2016.

So what can be expected going forward? And what should be done in the months ahead?

As with the Brittany Maynard story in 2014, passage of the California law in 2015 has put wind in the sails of the doctor-prescribed suicide movement.

In the months ahead, individuals and groups that recognize the very real danger posed to vulnerable patients must be willing to work with at least the same degree of commitment as those promoting death. And such commitment must be ongoing.

Understanding what this means includes recognizing the reality of such laws—all of which are patterned on Oregon’s “Death with Dignity Act”—and

then sharing that information with friends, family, neighbors, colleagues, etc.

For example, few people in states where such a measure is pending ever hear about it. Or if they do, they often read that such a proposed law contains “safeguards,” and that Oregon’s experience has shown that there are no problems or abuses.

Yet the so-called safeguards are not worth the paper on which they are written. One such safeguard is the requirement that before writing the deadly prescription the doctor must inform the patient of all “feasible alternatives.” But telling someone about treatment alternatives does not mean that the patient has the resources to access those alternatives.

Although more people than in the past have medical insurance, many still do not. And, even for those who do, the stark reality is that authorization for payment for such alternatives may depend on cost-effectiveness. The price of drugs for assisted suicide is minuscule compared to the cost of providing treatment to make a patient more comfortable and to extend life.

What could be more cost-effective than a prescription for a deadly overdose of drugs?

And then there’s the claim that Oregon’s experience has proven how safe such laws are because the state’s official annual reports do not indicate any problems or abuses.

There are big problems with that claim.

All information in official reports is provided by those who carry out assisted suicide. And, on top of that, there are no penalties for non-reporting or for inaccurate or incomplete reporting to state authorities. Do we really believe that any doctor prescribing a lethal overdose of barbiturates to a patient would report that he or she didn’t follow the law or that the patient was being pressured by others to request the drugs?

As we look ahead to what will happen in 2016, it is helpful to recognize that each and every person has a responsibility to protect vulnerable patients. And it is also important to recognize that, if we don’t make stopping doctor-prescribed suicide a priority, we could face the following scenario: While standing in line at the pharmacy to pick up a prescription for antibiotics, you overhear the pharmacist explaining to the person ahead of you, “She should take all of this with a light snack and alcohol to cause death.” And when that person turns around to leave, you see that she is a friend who has a sick mother. She is picking up the drugs for her mother’s death.

## NOTES

1. Oregon’s “Death with Dignity Act” passed by voter initiative in 1994 but, due to court challenges, did not go into effect until October 1997. For more information on the Oregon law, see: <http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org/site/oregon>.

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2. For a complete list of states and proposals since 1994, see, “Attempts to Legalize” at: <http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org/site/failed-attempts-usa>.
3. Washington passed a voter initiative permitting doctor-prescribed suicide in 2008. The law went into effect in March 2009. For more information on the Washington law, see: <http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org/site/washington>. Vermont legislators approved the state’s “Patient Choice at End of Life Bill” in 2013. It was signed by the Governor on May 20, 2013, and went into effect immediately. For more information on the Vermont law, see: <http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org/site/vermont/>
4. Many news articles refer to Montana as a state that has legalized assisted suicide. However, the situation in that state amounts to only *de facto* legalization, resulting from a December 31, 2009, Montana Supreme Court decision. The court did not officially legalize assisted suicide but said that, if charged with assisting a suicide, a doctor could use the patient’s request as a defense. For more information about doctor-prescribed suicide in Montana, see: <http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org/site/montana>.
5. In 2015, laws to permit doctor-prescribed suicide were under consideration in AK, CA, CO, CT, DE, DC, HI, IA, KS, ME, MD, MA, MN, MO, MT, NV, NY, NC, OK, PA, RI, TN, UT, WI, and WY.

—*Rita L. Marker is an attorney and executive director of the Patients Rights Council.*

### *Tim Goeglein & Doug Napier*

This was the year one video changed everything.

Released in mid-July by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP), the eight-minute clip showed a glib Planned Parenthood executive sipping her wine and casually breaking down the most cost-efficient ways to dismember a living baby. Over the next few weeks, millions of viewers finally saw for themselves what pro-life activists have been trying to expose for decades . . . the cold, calculating heart beneath one of the most benevolent corporate images in America.

Eleven more videos followed—each one feeding the fires of outrage that, overnight, engulfed Planned Parenthood and seriously threatened its most precious possession: its multi-million-dollar bottom line. The company struck back with every high-priced lawyer, high-profile Hollywood ally, and high-toned Presidential endorsement at its disposal—frantically trying to unpaint the new portrait of evil the videos revealed. Accusations of distortion and deliberate mis-editing by CMP were quickly exposed as the desperate ploys they so obviously were.

People knew now. The seeds of doubt were planted, and Planned Parenthood’s maneuverings only served to irrigate them. Before the year was over, the U.S. Senate had done what only months earlier seemed unthinkable—voted to defund the once-impregnable giant of the abortion industry. At this writing, the U.S. House of Representatives seems poised to do the same.

That leaves the President, with his veto . . . a veto he will undoubtedly use. But in doing so, he cannot help but align himself with that icy-souled creature now emblazoned on the cultural memory, sipping her wine and discussing

how to remove a living baby's brain as coolly as one might pith a frog.

The political ramifications of this new debate over Planned Parenthood extend out into this year's campaigns: In an extraordinary solidarity, every one of the dozen-plus 2016 Republican presidential candidates went on record as favoring the defunding of the nation's number-one abortion provider. And with the appointment of a House Select Committee to investigate Planned Parenthood activities (effectively synchronizing the investigations of several other Congressional committees), the probing of that now-shaky public image is likely to continue apace in the year ahead.

That probing builds in part on detailed reports on Planned Parenthood practices released each of the past several years by Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a legal non-profit currently pressing multiple lawsuits against Planned Parenthood in several states. Those lawsuits expose the company's extensive fraud against taxpayers. Under "whistle-blower" laws, former Planned Parenthood employees are testifying to the myriad ways the company's practices endanger the very women it purports to serve . . . while charging taxpayers nearly 10 times their actual cost and overcharging the amounts allowed by federal and state law.

The 2015 ADF report to Congress also details the failure of Planned Parenthood employees nationwide to report suspected sexual abuse of teenage girls seeking abortions at their facilities. ADF has provided these same reports to state governments and pro-life groups across the U.S., many of which are energetically pursuing their own efforts to defund Planned Parenthood.

The nation's courts, too, are moving with new speed to defend life—or at least the right of others to defend it. The U.S. Supreme Court's recent unanimous ruling in *McCullen v. Coakley*—striking down the "buffer zones" Massachusetts officials were using to keep sidewalk abortion counselors away from those entering Boston abortion clinics—continues to have a domino effect on other states. Counselors, free of the zones, are reaching hundreds of women every year with their compassion.

In 2016, the High Court is scheduled to hear seven cases from Christian non-profit organizations asking for religious liberty protections like those the Court granted *for-profit* companies in its 2014 *Conestoga Wood Specialties v. Burwell* decision. These include the right to both opt out of this administration's HHS abortion pill mandate and not be complicit in any so-called "accommodations." (The mandate currently requires all non-profits—even some with documented, religion-based opposition to abortion—to provide insurance coverage directly or indirectly for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilization, and contraception or face heavy financial penalties from the IRS.)

The Supreme Court has also agreed to rule on the constitutionality of a

Texas law that would require abortion clinics to provide the same basic protections required of other health-care facilities, including requiring doctors who perform abortions to have privileges at a local hospital where the patient can be treated in case of complications—something that occurs too often in the abortion industry. Those pressing the abortion agenda often claim to want to make abortions “safe, legal, and rare.” In truth, this case shows, they count “safe” and “rare” expendable, so long as they can keep abortion legal. The Court’s decision will determine whether abortion politics trump the safety of women in Texas—and perhaps in every other state, too.

Perhaps the best thing to come out of the flurry of pro-life activity born of the CMP videos has been a new surge in cooperation among pro-life organizations. National and state groups have come together in new and imaginative ways—combining staff, funds, and resources to develop strategies that have capitalized on the public’s revulsion at what the videos revealed about the abortion industry. Meanwhile, Family Policy Councils coast to coast have asked for and received these groups’ help and cooperation in reaching out forcefully to persuade their state leaders to defund Planned Parenthood—an effort that will extend into the 2016 legislative season.

Working together, these groups have offered tangible proof of what Planned Parenthood only promises: genuine, safe, compassionate care for women and their babies. An ADF-created website, [GetYourCare.org](http://GetYourCare.org), for instance, includes maps that allow any woman, anywhere in the country, to plug in her zip code and locate the nearest of more than 13,000 Federal Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)—each a more-than-viable alternative to any of Planned Parenthood’s 665 facilities nationwide.

When the public is informed about the realities of abortion, they respond in powerful ways. In 2015, a significant portion of the American people learned more about Planned Parenthood and the abortion industry than ever before. This year will see even more of that information disseminated—and in all likelihood, an even stronger response from a nation increasingly reminded of its responsibility for and commitment to preserving life.

*—Tim Goeglein is vice president of External Relations for Focus on the Family. Doug Napier is senior counsel, executive vice president, and Chief Alliance Officer with Alliance Defending Freedom.*

### **William Murchison**

I knew it, I knew it! “A Bad Year for Reproductive Rights,” was the headline on the *New York Times* editorial of last Dec. 20: so sallow and care-worn, more than a little bit haggard.

I understood instantly, before reading further, that it had been a fine year for unborn life.

The *Times*' official funk made that possibly disputed point as plain as day. "Political opponents," the editorial declared in summary, "have shown how quickly they can regroup and find ways to restrict or obliterate programs and services women need." To wit, through enacting at the state legislative level 288 laws assailing "the right of women to control what happens with their own bodies without the interference of politicians."

A trend initiated in 2011 "accelerated in 2015," the *Times* continued dolefully, its chin dragging the floor, "as state legislators passed 57 new constraints on a woman's right to choose." Meaning chiefly, it would seem, laws like the one passed by Texas in 2013, "requiring abortion clinics to meet the same building, equipment, and staffing standards as ambulatory surgical centers, a costly and medically unnecessary standard. The law also required doctors who perform abortions to have"—just in case—"admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the clinic. . . . In many states, including Texas, these laws have resulted in the shuttering of all but a few clinics that perform abortions, forcing women to travel hundreds of miles for the procedure."

Yes? Yes? And the problem to which all of this points is . . .? The problem, from the *Times*' standpoint, is that, improbably, modern American culture still hasn't choked down the 43-year-old revelation that the extinction of unborn life is a constitutional entitlement.

You might have supposed otherwise. The Supreme Court certainly did when, in *Roe v. Wade*, it wove this previously unsuspected right into the constitutional fabric. In time, people get used to things, don't they? Innovation comes to look like habit. In 1973 many of us strove to look like Sonny and Cher; Oprah and Steve Jobs were yet to attract notice; John Wayne was still making Westerns; Dick Nixon had just crushed George McGovern at the polls. Gone—that whole era. What lives? The affirmation that unborn life requires protection. That's what lives—to the amazement (whether "disgust" might be the better word I decline to speculate) of the *New York Times*' editorial staff, with its self-assumed responsibility for dragging the riff-raff toward nobler understandings of the human process.

Far away from the supervision of the intelligentsia, state legislatures have been enacting measures whose effect is not so much the retarding of the "right to choose" as it is the signifying of respect for a moral law no 7-2 judicial decision can cancel.

Speaking of which: The Texas Legislature's alleged imposition of "barriers" to choice reaches the Supreme Court amid the tumult and shouting of a

presidential election. Will the High Court take the opportunity to reverse or unwind *Roe v. Wade*? I think one may say with utter confidence: No way, Jose. No court majority of which I can conceive is ready for so revolutionary—better said, so counterrevolutionary—a step.

The moral—as contrasted with the legal/political—side of the debate is the side that will tell in the end. That is where factors such as the Planned Parenthood debacle come into play—to the discomfort of many disposed to say blithely, “Aw, it’s not a people issue, it’s a rights issue.” Really? The slicing and dicing of recognizably human forms is all about who gets to do what in this old world? “Who gets to do what” on what terms? The mastery of a stronger party over an as-yet voiceless one: one no longer enjoying as of 1973 the presumption of innocence, the benefit of the growing, nagging doubt?

The legal dominance of the pro-choice side in American life stems from that side’s grim if politically salable conviction that Woman is entitled to veto-proof decision-making in restitution for centuries of oppression. Well, what if other, non-allied convictions should come to the fore in just the way that pro-convictions did: working their way up the cultural ladder to the very top; based on radically new (albeit, at bottom, very old) understandings of what it means to be created in the image of that God for whom modern society has such paltry concern?

I do not say it will happen (because how would I, or anyone else, really know?). I say that episodes such as the Planned Parenthood debacle feed the assumption that, golly, something isn’t just the way it ought to be. They feed likewise the assumption that something should be done about it. To the recovery—inevitably partial in our fallen world—of our depleted moral sense. And to the utter consternation of the *New York Times*’ editorial writers, bless their uncomprehending hearts.

—*William Murchison is a syndicated columnist and senior editor of the Human Life Review. His latest book is The Cost of Liberty (ISI, 2013), a biography of John Dickinson.*

### ***Mary Meehan***

The sting videos on Planned Parenthood provided the top story for the pro-life movement in 2015. A strong second, though, was how many pro-life politicians mishandled the story. Their failures demand major attention because, if they are not corrected, they are likely to be repeated.

When David Daleiden and his Center for Medical Progress released the first “baby body parts” videos last summer, there was much public shock

and dismay. At long last, the major media showed the reality of abortion, at least for a short time. Planned Parenthood was in such trouble that it actually seemed in danger of losing its more than \$500 million in government funding.

Right after Daleiden released the first video last July, though, PP President Cecile Richards put her media people into high gear. She and her staff apparently called in lots of favors from politicians whom the PP political operation had supported and funded for years. From Democratic presidential candidates down to junior members of Congress, the Democrats stood up for Planned Parenthood.

Meanwhile, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives produced several different hearings on Planned Parenthood—none of which showed the videos. (A federal judge in California had issued an injunction that interfered with committee subpoenas for the videos.) This made the hearings resemble criminal trials in which prosecutors fail to produce the main evidence. Columnist Mona Charen wrote an open letter to “Dear Republican Members of Congress” and told them bluntly: “You guys do not understand how to hold a decent hearing. . . . If, due to legal wrangling, the videos cannot be shown now, then why not hold off the hearings until they can be shown? The videos are the story.” She said some Republicans at one congressional hearing “behaved like talk radio hosts—interrupting the witness, shouting, and demanding yes or no answers. This is not good government. It isn’t even good theater. You look like bullies.”

*National Review* editor Rich Lowry, in a piece for politico.com, was also quite critical of the congressional pro-lifers. And David Harsanyi, writing in the federalist.com, was scorching. “If for some reason you needed additional evidence that the Republican Party was deeply incompetent, unprepared, uncoordinated, inexcusably lazy,” he wrote, “then try watching Cecile Richards’ appearance in front of Congress yesterday.”

They were all referring to a hearing by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee last September 29. The only witness was PP President Cecile Richards, who is beautiful, poised, and articulate. She also has remarkable self-control; she never lost her temper, although some of the questioners did look and sound like bullies.

Not all of them, though. Reps. John Duncan (Tenn.), John Mica (Fla.), Gary Palmer (Ala.), Timothy Walberg (Mich.), and Mark Walker (N.C.) were polite, but also effective. Colleagues who take part in future hearings might want to study their style.

Congressional Republicans will continue examining PP’s provision of fetal body parts for research. Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) heads a new House select committee that will investigate this and related issues in depth over a

one-year period. Here are some suggestions for Rep. Blackburn and her pro-life colleagues:

1) Resist all temptations to bully witnesses. It produces sympathy for Planned Parenthood leaders instead of for unborn children, and it interferes with fact-finding. What's needed, instead, is courteous but steady questioning that reveals facts and patterns.

2) Have one or two witnesses who can speak about the heavy influence of eugenics on Planned Parenthood—especially its influence on Margaret Sanger and Alan Guttmacher. Both PP leaders were members of the American Eugenics Society, and Guttmacher also served as a board member and vice president of that group. Sanger and Guttmacher set a direction, which Planned Parenthood still follows today, of targeting poor people and minorities for major population-control efforts.

3) It's important to emphasize, though, that Sanger opposed abortion in most cases. Although she thought it was justified in some hard cases, she made strong statements against abortion in general. In her 1938 autobiography, she recalled that the handout for her first birth-control clinic had urged women: "DO NOT KILL, DO NOT TAKE LIFE, BUT PREVENT. . . ." She said she and her colleagues told women "that abortion was the wrong way—no matter how early it was performed it was taking life; that contraception was the better way, the safer way—it took a little time, a little trouble, but was well worthwhile in the long run, because life had not yet begun." At a 1952 conference in India, she declared: "Abortions break down the health of the mother without preventing renewed pregnancy at an early date. Abortions are the very worst way to prevent increase in the population." Guttmacher, on the other hand, supported abortion for population control. He was a key leader in the campaign to legalize abortion in the U.S. in the 1960s and early 1970s.

4) It would be useful to ask why so many extremely wealthy people—including Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, and George Soros—have used their foundations to funnel a great amount of money to Planned Parenthood and other population-control groups. This tradition goes back a century, to oil baron John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Early donors often supported PP for eugenics reasons. Today's wealthy are more likely to mention environmental concerns, although some may also have eugenic and/or economic motives for suppressing the number of poor people.

5) Holly O'Donnell, a young woman who worked briefly for a company that retrieved fetal body parts from a Planned Parenthood clinic, was very credible and impressive in her interview for the Daleiden videos. If she is willing to appear before the new committee, she could make many people

rethink both the body-parts industry and abortion itself. And the Pro-Life Action League, based in Chicago, has taped many talks by people who used to be involved in abortion, but turned against it. Some of those people could also be effective committee witnesses. They could provide a bridge on which conflicted abortion-clinic workers might cross over to the pro-life side. Members of the general public—and possibly even a few Democrats in Congress—could use the same bridge.

—*Mary Meehan is a freelance journalist and senior editor of the Human Life Review.*

### ***Wesley J. Smith***

The year 2015 will go down in history either as euthanasia's high water mark before the ebb, or the time when the culture of death reached a tipping point and began an implacable march across Western Civilization.

In October, the worst news came out of Canada, where that country's Supreme Court trampled democratic deliberation by unanimously conjuring a charter right to "termination of life" for anyone who has an "irremediable medical condition" and wants to die.<sup>1</sup> Note the scope of the judicial fiat is not limited to the terminally ill: The ruling grants competent adults a right to die if they have an "illness, disease, or disability that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual," including "psychological" pain.

Even these broad words inadequately describe the truly radical social policy Canada's Supreme Court unleashed. For example, a treatable condition can qualify as "irremediable" if the patient chooses not to pursue available remedies. So an "irremediable" condition that permits life-termination may actually be wholly remediable, except that the patient would rather die than receive care.

The Court graciously allowed (he wrote sarcastically) Parliament a year to pass laws consistent with its fiat—to maintain the pretense of respect for democratic deliberation. Meanwhile, the Canadian medical leadership seems to have capitulated completely to the culture of death, with the consensus among provincial medical colleges and associations being that all doctors will have to be complicit in killing legally qualified patients—either by doing the deed or procuring a death-doctor who will. This presents the sickening scenario of doctors being professionally disciplined for refusing to violate the Hippocratic Oath.

We won't know all the gory details about how Canada's radical euthanasia regimen will be regulated until 2016. But Quebec has already begun legalized euthanasia based on a provincial law passed separately from the action of the Canadian Supreme Court. Showing which way the wind is blowing, when

a palliative care center declared it would not participate in killing patients, Quebec's Minister of Health ominously said, in effect, "Oh, yes you will!" And soon, the palliative center backed down and agreed to offer euthanasia as part of its services.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the media—led by *People* and CNN<sup>3</sup>—made brain-cancer patient Brittany Maynard into an international *cause célèbre* for advocating legalization of, and in late 2014, committing, assisted suicide. The emotionalism and hype around her case—who hasn't seen the photo of her smiling broadly holding a puppy?—proved irresistible to the leftwing California Legislature. In a special session that was called to deal with Medicaid financing issues, it shoved through a legalization bill, applying to the terminally ill.

Governor Jerry Brown—who once worked with Mother Teresa—betrayed everything she stood for by quickly signing the bill into law. *It was all about him.* "In the end," Brown wrote, "I had to reflect on what I would want in the face of my own death." Brown explained that he would find "comfort" in knowing that the option of assisted suicide was available to him to prevent a painful death.<sup>4</sup> That others will be hurt by this radical change in law and medical ethics didn't matter a whit.

In 2015, the already radical euthanasia regimes of Belgium and the Netherlands, and the suicide clinics in Switzerland, grew even more brazen. In Belgium, a depressed, physically healthy woman was approved for euthanasia,<sup>5</sup> but she is still alive because she changed her mind before the deed could be done. In the Netherlands, psychiatrists stepped up their participation in euthanasia, killing about 40 mentally ill people a year (as of 2013). Meanwhile, a poll of Dutch general practitioners found 34 percent would "consider" euthanizing the mentally ill, while a whopping 86 percent would "consider" administering lethal injections, and that six out of ten have put their belief in euthanasia into action by actually killing patients.<sup>6</sup> In Switzerland, a suicide clinic helped dispatch a healthy British 75-year-old woman, who killed herself rather than grow old and become a burden on the National Health Service.<sup>7</sup>

Which brings us to a bit of good news on the euthanasia front. The United Kingdom Parliament, which has been subjected to intense pressure to legalize assisted suicide, forcefully refused to do so in an overwhelming vote.<sup>8</sup> Ditto the more than 20 U.S. states that had legalization bills pending, all of which were—California a huge exception to the contrary—rejected.

With the good news eclipsed by the bad, euthanasia and assisted suicide spreading like a stain raises the chilling prospect of social martyrdom. What do I mean? Many stories of assisted suicides and euthanasia deaths these

days chirpily report that family and friends gathered for the planned death. With all of Canada now succumbing to the culture of death, along with more than 10 percent of the United States population living in California, Oregon, Washington, and Vermont, you too may one day be asked to lend your support by attending and witnessing a loved one's assisted suicide.

Such an invitation would create a terrible conundrum for those who think medicalized killing is morally and medically wrong. If you attend, you are validating your loved one's suicide and sending the unintentional message that "Yes, you are a burden. Your life is undignified and not worth living. Your family is better off with you dead."

But refusing—at least in circumstances involving terminal illness or profound disability—could result in the loss of valued friendships, family estrangement, and accusations of cold-hearted moralistic judgmentalism (not to mention the guilt of being absent when a loved one dies).<sup>9</sup>

If you ever receive such an invitation, I hope you will send your unequivocal refusal and (just as importantly) offer to help the sufferer find a better way forward. That kind of compassionate engagement and noncooperation with the culture of death will come at some risk. But saying no will protect you from moral complicity in a death—and it could be the act that dissuades your loved one from taking a terrible and irrevocable course.

## NOTES

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### ***Helen Alvaré***

At first glance, it could seem surprising that a journal devoted primarily to the subject matter of abortion would persist for decades. A lost Supreme Court case, now 43 long years old. Thousands of abortions daily, coast to coast. Nearly lockstep agreement among fêted universities and scholars.

Yet even a little experience in the “world” of abortion and abortion discourse tells the other side of the story. Presidential sang-froid in the face of the Planned Parenthood videos notwithstanding . . . people are still generally horrified at abortion procedures and “outcomes” (mangled human bodies). To paraphrase the words of William Buckley, Jr.: The problem with “abortion rights” is and was and always will be, abortion! Abortion immediately challenges the ordinary and respectable life around it, whatever its incarnation. The clinic in the neighborhood. The body in the incinerator. The body parts in the cooler. The survivor who lives to tell the tale. In the same way that contemporary societies never leave off marveling at how a seemingly civilized nation could have enslaved a race, or murdered a religion—we will never leave off turning over and over in our heads the fact of an abortion clinic near a supermarket near an apartment building near a hospital where they save prematurely born babies.

And then there’s abortion discourse. If I had a nickel for every time someone accused me of being “single issue” . . . (you know where this is going). But in fact abortion is by its nature “legion.” Everyone who has ever engaged an acquaintance on the topic knows that a person’s abortion opinion signals his or her views on numerous other issues. In order to engage about abortion therefore, it’s necessary to address other presumptions or preferences or commitments swirling about the orbit of the abortion question. This should come as no surprise. You don’t decide that killing human beings is okay without signing off on several dozen other conclusions, deep and shallow, great and small, explicitly or *sub rosa*.

So a journal that takes on abortion has to take on all of it. The meaning of the body. Dualism. The nature of human rights. Subjectivism. The significance of the link between sex and procreation. Feminism. The claims of the vulnerable. Philosophy, theology, genetics, psychology, neurobiology, sociology. I could go on.

In other words, in order to do justice to the abortion issue, nothing less

than the *Human Life Review* was warranted, intellectually and culturally. It will be remembered with deep gratitude whenever the essential history of the U.S. abortion debate is recounted.

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# Demography and Europe's Destiny

*Ellen Wilson Fielding*

Perhaps the most obvious civilizational struggle that the West and (since the Syrian refugee crisis) Europe face today is the engagement with Islam in general and Islamic terrorism in particular. As important as this struggle is, this is not the topic I am addressing in this article. Instead, I will be considering some of the demographic implications of Western European cultural choices that, even apart from Islam, even if Islam had never emerged from the deserts of Arabia, would have suggested real peril and perhaps a failure of will for the Western Civilization that formed Europe and its former colonies, including the United States.

When we encounter updates on the current demographic death spiral in Europe and elsewhere, they sometimes make use of the metaphor of national suicide. Note that I opened this paragraph with the metaphor of a “death spiral.” Other writers have referred to the West losing its will to live, for example, as though it were a depressed or suicidal human being. Of course, groups of all kinds have always been subject to personification as a means to illuminate truths, though the personification may be misapplied or extended beyond its usefulness. So we are accustomed to referring to “old” and “young” nations and civilizations: The United States, for example, through most of its 200-plus-year-old history has seen itself and been seen by others as youthful and energetic. Our self-descriptions have generally emphasized the positive qualities of youth, such as freedom from outmoded ideas, boldness and energy, optimism and initiative. “Elder” nations such as the European mother countries have perhaps focused on the negatives of American youthfulness: inexperience, brashness and carelessness, historical and cultural ignorance, or lack of appreciation for the past.

A kind of identity crisis ensues when this youthful self-image is applied to a nation that itself is graying at a pretty fast clip, even if we are lagging behind the Europeans and the Japanese. Perhaps as a nation we risk turning into those ludicrous men and women who dress and act 20 or 30 years younger than their age.

At the beginning of the last century, the Turkish remnant of the Ottoman Empire was popularly dismissed as the Sick Man of Europe—weak and essentially powerless. In the last half of the 1800s Spain was viewed as having

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entered its dotage as a world power—or indeed as any kind of significant player on the world stage. She had been denuded of her major colonies in the Western Hemisphere earlier in the century, in the revolutions ushered in by Simon Bolivar. The same tail end of the nineteenth century that confirmed Spain's decline saw the “youthful” United States beginning to dabble in some empire-building now that she had occupied both coasts of her home continent and everything in between. She picked up Cuba (briefly), Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines from Spain in (from the U.S. perspective) that “splendid little war,” the Spanish-American War.

Now, there is some usefulness in using this age metaphor to describe seemingly spent societies (or up-and-coming ones), or there would not be so many examples of it. It is similar in that way to the mechanistic models that, post-Industrial Revolution, we also have applied to people and nations. So for example we talk of countries losing their drive or slowing down, or refer to progress grinding to a halt. Governments break down, or are slowed, seemingly, by the mere effect of the friction of passing time.

But when it comes to personifying societies and civilizations as aging or spent, we need to think about how we see that metaphor playing out in the lives of those societies' citizens in order to get a sense of what truly is going on in their lives.

To begin with, many decaying or moribund societies, historically speaking, have not been especially old if we look at the ratio of elderly to young in their populations or the average age of their citizens. Although Great Britain lost a staggering percentage of young men to World War I (and sectors of the United States fared likewise in the Civil War), only truly small societies like tribes or city-states broken down by brutal war have therefore been transformed into “old” societies in the sense of societies peopled mostly by the old.

No, by and large the aging society metaphor has traditionally been used to describe something more like a psychological condition than a physical state. Only, even here we have to watch what we really mean, particularly as applied to the current situation of demographically imploding areas like Europe. For example, from time to time in the history of nations there have been long—centuries-long, sometimes millennia-long—periods during which a nation or civilization receded, relatively speaking, from its prior achievements in statecraft, artistic innovation, and other indications of national vitality. We think of Egypt after the Roman conquest, or China or India at the time of European outreach to those areas. People there continued, more or less, getting and spending, marrying and being given in marriage, but nothing much of major consequence seemed to be going on. Great clashes of ideas, advances in science and the arts, or significant innovations were lacking. These former

giants in the world of men had seemingly become pygmies or, to shift metaphors, they had moved from the center of world affairs to a backwater.

Now, although Europe is a major force to be reckoned with in world affairs, something like this seems to be looming in its future. To a significantly lesser extent, world demographics seem to point that way over time for the United States as well, when we consider the rising percentage of the elderly here and our near-stagnant demographics, minus immigration. However, there are respects in which the current situation also differs from the earlier ones I have mentioned. (There are other areas of the world also facing demographic crises, but in this article I will be restricting myself exclusively to the West.)

Take population. In the past, one sure way for a powerful country to decline in significance was for some cataclysm to drastically cut the population. Even more in the pre-technological era than today, there was no substitute for warm bodies if you wanted to dominate others. Great plagues and natural disasters as well as destructive and prolonged civil wars could eclipse a promising country's influence for a protracted recovery period.

In addition, the natural human impulse to value most highly one's own tribe and family, the basis for loyalty and patriotism, has easily degenerated throughout history into less defensible and more destructive forms of xenophobia and racism. These were given a veneer of intellectual and pseudo-scientific respectability in the mid-1800s through theories of racial hierarchy, such as Aryanism, developed by thinkers like Schopenhauer and Gobineau, then picked up by a number of linguists, anthropologists, and biologists. By the early decades of the 1900s, both in the United States and the "Nordic" countries of Europe, fears of being engulfed by more quickly multiplying black, brown, and yellow races—fears about the decline of the West in terms of power and influence—were periodically reinforced by concerns about comparative population growth. The same early twentieth-century white Anglo-Saxon educated upper classes that nourished the racially based eugenicism of Planned Parenthood's founder Margaret Sanger also feared that, vis-à-vis the more backward peoples of the world, they were likely to recede in influence and energy if they did not overtake them in population—or cause them in turn to recede. So much a staple of the wealthy WASP stereotype was this attitude that F. Scott Fitzgerald could drop it into an early scene of *The Great Gatsby*, confident that it would do its work in telling his readership what type of person Tom Buchanan was:

"Civilization is just going to pieces," broke out Tom violently. "I've gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things. Have you read *The Rise of the Coloured Empires* by this man Goddard? . . . The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved."

“It’s up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things . . . . This idea is that we’re all Nordics . . . . And we’ve produced all the things that go to make civilization—oh, science and art, and all that.”

But minus the racist fears of the Yellow Peril, the perception that, to some degree, size matters in world domination is hard to refute. Yes, England lorded it over an Indian subcontinent that vastly outnumbered its entire home island of Great Britain, let alone the thin crust of British colonials sent out to Rule on behalf of Britannia. However, even the British could not have managed this feat with a population the size of, say, Luxembourg.

So those maps you see nowadays that scale the size of countries to their populations—and then project demographic changes out 20, 30, 50, 75 years—have a lesson to tell. With few exceptions, every nation on earth shows declining fertility rates to some degree; in much of the developing world, where fertility rates are still above replacement level and life expectancy is rising with better health care, population growth is projected to occur certainly through this century at least, considerably after Europe (and some Asian nations) will see actual population decreasing. For at least the mid-term future, and barring planetary disaster, the currently most populous nations will not only outnumber the West but do so by an increased margin as the twenty-first century wears on—and the obvious difference will be an even greater disparity in the proportion of young people.

**T**hat leads us to reflect on what this might or might not mean for Western Civilization, which was born in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean world, given new life and direction by Christianity, and spread and developed over 2,000 years in Western Europe (and latterly its colonies). And the first point that might be made is how ambivalent a now largely secularized and relativistic West is about its own history and heritage. The European Union that a dozen years ago declined to acknowledge its Christian roots in its Constitution was at least being honest about the non-Christian nature of its contemporary values, such as a version of self-determination whose latitude extends in many member states to assisted suicide, abortion, self-selected genders, and same-sex marriage.

Sure, most Europeans—like most Americans—know little of their history, and most of what they have been taught is tendentiously anti-Christian, with the heroes being the scientists, inventors, heterodox thinkers, and rebels. So to the extent that they do not truly know their origins, they are like amnesiacs trying to reconstruct their autobiography. The great monuments to Christian worship, education, and culture in their midst—the cathedrals, monasteries, anciently founded universities—are little more intelligible to many twenty-first-century Europeans than Stonehenge. In fact, many current tenants of

these structures feel more kinship with Stonehenge or the caves of Lascaux than with the Cathedral of Chartres or the monastery at Clairvaux or the Island of Iona.

If inheritors of Western Civilization, born in the Mediterranean amalgam of Christianity with Greco-Roman culture, increasingly doubt the peculiar truth and value of that heritage, its moral and philosophical authority, then on what basis except perceived self-interest would they seek to exert giant-sized influence over the course of world events, whether in the realm of economics, science, or culture?

Those insufferably jingoistic middle managers of the British Empire that turn up in history and period fiction believed, like Tom Buchanan, in the superiority of the West (though by Buchanan's day this had degenerated into racial theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority shortly to be fully realized in Hitler's Germany).

It is not that the West at the time the European powers were building empires had little to offer Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. It isn't even that the corruption and venality of many of the empire builders to some extent overwhelmed the benefits of medicine, machines, the administration of justice, and conceptions of civil and human rights, even if inadequately realized. It's that the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was in important ways *more* unfit to convey the distinctive gifts of its heritage than it had been in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when first colonizing the New World. As individuals and citizens of nations, Europeans were less united around a common faith that produced as its fruit an understanding of all human beings as God's beloved children, created for heaven (though their final destination was then up to free will), and equally entitled to fairness and the enjoyment of basic human rights.

Our fallen nature, friendly to greed, pride, and ambition, has often frustrated the implementation of this religiously derived vision. Although missionaries accompanied the early European explorers of the Americas from Columbus' time, and although some at least of the soldiers, adventurers, and government administrators making their way across the Atlantic were decent or even devout men (it comes as a bit of a shock to recall that St. Teresa of Avila's brothers were among the many conquistadores who sailed to the New World), most were preoccupied with seeking some degree of personal glory, wealth, or power. Quite understandably, therefore, early evangelizing efforts in Mexico were only very modestly successful until Our Lady of Guadalupe literally appeared to a native Mexican to take things into her own hands, resulting in the conversion of most of that population—millions of people—within a few years.

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when European attention had turned to Africa and Asia, there was if anything an even bigger disconnect between the Europeans (and eventually Americans) seeking to win fortunes and those many missionaries seeking to win souls for Christ and help ensure fair treatment for indigenous populations. Back home, all kinds of currents were carrying much of Europe's population away from its Christian origins. Deism, French rationalism, German biblical criticism, English freethinkers, anarchism, and all sorts of social and political revolutionary movements were untethered in practice if not always in theory from the moorings of Europe's Christian foundation.

Today, the greater part of the governing and financial elites of Europe, the technocrats of our own Silicon Valley, and the makers of medical and bioengineering marvels have absorbed the reinterpretation of thousands of years of Western history. Instead of seeing in them the long, slow, and (even at its zenith) painfully partial conversion of mind, heart, and soul to a view of history as the purposeful unfolding of a divine plan of infinite complexity, taking into account the obstinate desires and misguided machinations of human agents, they instead see in them the tortuously slow progress of humanity fighting free of religious dogma and obscurantism. The schools teach them to fixate on the sexism, racism, social and economic exploitation, and restriction of free thought in olden times, which (to personify once again) constitute for many the childhood and adolescence of the West. Small wonder, then, that secularists applaud the West's belated bid for independence from priests and creeds with the coming of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the triumph of democracy, and the emergence of the many social movements.

Was the entire colonial and post-colonial domination of the less-developed areas of the world, then, premised on a false sense of superiority? Didn't the West still have science and technology to offer the rest of the world, even in the colonial era and the age of empires, and doesn't it still have that to offer—the scientific method and all that? Yes and no. Of course, Westerners (the British, to be precise) invented the internal combustion engine that launched the Industrial Revolution. They also revolutionized medicine through major advances such as (to name a few) inoculation, germ theory, and the discovery of antibiotics. These and a virtual cascade of labor-saving and life-saving inventions and discoveries over several centuries were the product of a view of the world and its laws as accessible to the rational mind.

However, even acknowledging the progress for humanity of the West's technological and scientific revolutions, many Westerners find these fruits of reason and the scientific method to be to some extent poisoned by a history of exploiting workers and raping the environment. It is not much of an

exaggeration to say that Western governments, the United Nations, and private mega-philanthropists like Bill and Melinda Gates seem to believe that one of the most productive things they can do is to reduce population growth in developing countries (since the West has already largely accomplished such a reduction at home).

Now, if we were still in the era of Margaret Sanger—which was the era of Tom Buchanan and his fears for his “Nordic” race—then we could attribute the efforts of the UN and the rich nations of the world to curb population growth in Africa, Asia, and Latin America almost solely to racism and fears of being overtaken, economically or as world powers. And as Mary Meehan has meticulously demonstrated in her articles on the twentieth-century coalition of Planned Parenthood, the eugenics movement, and abortion advocates (see “The Triumph of Eugenics in Prenatal Testing,” Part I and Part II, in the Summer and Fall 2009 *Human Life Review*), racism and rivalry remain important motivators for many of these actors. However, beginning in the latter part of the twentieth century and accelerating in the early years of the twenty-first, environmentalism and the issue of climate change have complicated matters.

Consider: Climate change science (and it is irrelevant to this argument whether you believe in it or whether and to what extent it is affected by human action) 1) identifies accelerating climate change; 2) predicts catastrophic weather events and climate alterations such as droughts, extreme storms, and rising sea levels; 3) locates in human actions such as energy use and deforestation an important if not *the* important cause of climate change; 4) therefore concludes that only large-scale human extreme self-discipline can moderate the climate change and hence the catastrophic fallout; 5) on surveying the map, identifies the developed world as chief culprit in climate change because of its much higher (per capita) energy usage, so the onus is on the industrialized and conspicuously consuming nations to ameliorate climate change.

However, especially in parts of the developing world that are industrializing quickly but lack the money to be very “green,” such as China, developing nations are also responsible for significant environmental damage and, theoretically, consequent climate change. Nevertheless, their relative poverty, the relative wealth of Western industrialized nations, and the West’s role in precipitating all this argue that the prosperous nations should still shoulder most of the sacrifice and expense of trying to beat back climate change on behalf of the planet. At least, that is more or less the dialogue now being played out.

With that groundwork laid, let’s look at how the motivations of eugenics

and natural dominance have intersected with and been largely overtaken by this newer, greener, climate change and environmental model. And the most obvious difference between these two modes of Western interaction with and attitudes toward less developed parts of the world is that the earlier version derives from a belief in Western superiority. The green/climate change rationale for encouraging population control, even when the population you are trying to control is that of another country or continent, is suffused with guilt or, more often, a mix of guilt and self-loathing.

However, the old and the new motivations for depopulating the global South often coexist, even at times in the same people. Much of the developing world is not only “behind” us in economic and technological terms, but (in the eyes of Westerners used to rejecting their own past laws, customs, and institutions) “behind” the West in its attachment to the traditional family, to love of children, and to once nearly universal cultural mores. Something of the imperial attitude persists in, for example, foreign healthcare workers pushing contraceptives on African women. It was displayed in the German Cardinal Kasper’s remarks during the first stage of the Synod on the Family in 2014, when questioned about the more traditional African Catholic hierarchy’s views on marriage and divorce. The cardinal, who stated that “[the African bishops] should not tell us too much what we should do,” clearly regarded them as theologically and intellectually backward—an attitude the Africans were unfortunately quite familiar with.

**G**iven Western self-loathing, this scorn of those outside the locus of Western Civilization’s sins may seem surprising. However, the ramping up of the environmental stakes, in combination with growing denial of human exceptionalism, mean that among Westerners in general and Europeans in particular a growing number also despise their entire species.

Although only the most alienated and extreme belong entirely in that camp, in more diluted form secularized Westerners and those whose liberal religious views provide few defenses against the spirit of the age can come to see human beings as pests on Planet Earth. It is easy enough, in short, for many to conceive that human beings—prosperous, advanced, large-foot-printed humans in particular, but all humans more or less—pose a threat to Earth and its other species. Only at the very edges of environmental advocacy (or of sanity) do you find people whose loathing of their own kind inclines them to pursue human annihilation or to assist in our species’ graduated disappearance. However, our cultural atmosphere, which turns every nature story into the battle between a threatened life form and greedy or blunderingly self-absorbed human beings, has its effect. It is hard to feel inspired by great

enterprises on behalf of one's fellow human beings if by helping them survive you may be digging, so to speak, Earth's grave.

Through a roundabout route, we arrive back at the question of the West's (and in particular, Europe's) perceived weakening of the will to live. Given below-replacement-level fertility rates over many years, what does it mean to diagnose in a nation or a civilization a death wish? We know what it means for a *person* to lose interest in life—to become depressed, feel hopeless or deeply apathetic, fail to find life meaningful or absorbing or productive, find no joy in activities that used to entertain, or in people and plans and possessions that once contributed to a life at least intermittently desirable and worthwhile. Is that the kind of thing that necessarily produces a suicidal, self-destructive society?

There have been countries in history that experienced, in conjunction with a clear collapse of momentum or decreased prosperity, decreased fertility rates as well, apart from war or disease. For example, the United States recorded sharp falls in births during the Great Depression. However, this was less a sign of mass hopelessness and clinical depression—although many unemployed and newly impoverished people were shocked into hopelessness by the economy's deep and prolonged collapse—than a practical reaction to straitened circumstances. It is true that very prolonged periods of massive unemployment, civil war, subjugation, and the like can breed defeatism and something we might by analogy call national depression, but any smaller or more confined catastrophes would not necessarily produce these more permanent social and psychological shifts.

Of course, in our time people can easily and legally avoid conceiving children. This has led to a changed model of human sexual and marital relations, so that a couple's decision to bear few children or none in the course of a lifetime is now unremarkable. In the 1960s in the U.S., when use of artificial contraceptives became widespread, the Baby Boom almost immediately shuddered to a halt, and abortion became the logical backup to the inevitable contraceptive failures. At this point, although we were about to enter the turbulent years of opposition to the Vietnam War, campus demonstrations and takeovers, "long hot summers" of racial riots, political assassinations, Cold War crises, and generational strife, the reigning mood, though passionate and at times angry, was certainly not despairing or hopeless.

The European situation differed in certain ways from ours, in part because of the post-World War II need to come to terms with and redefine (diminished) national and European roles, to assimilate the Eastern bloc in the late 80s and early 90s, and to deal separately and jointly with economic challenges.

In addition, Europe's population had long been more secularized than our own. However, overall, over the course of decades-long low fertility rates in Europe, there is no obvious economic or political correlation to point to as the cause of that effect.

In other words, although we can use the metaphor of national suicide to describe the projected implosion of European population, the motivations and psyches of those who choose not to reproduce or to restrict family size to a historically unheard of degree in relatively prosperous times are complicated. To begin with, they have been told for at least a couple of generations now that marriage and children are choices to be made according to calculations about likely happiness. If they make a mistake (conceive when they did not mean to, marry someone they are no longer happy with), they have not only the legal right but society's blessing to redirect the arc of their lives in a more promising direction.

Of course, even this formula for living (perhaps *especially* this formula for living—but that is beyond the scope of this article) does not prevent pain or guarantee happiness. People are strapped for time, overscheduled, and overextended. Relationships of all sorts are, as always, imperfect. Encumbered with a moral relativism that makes it difficult to know how to oppose situations that nevertheless bother them, they may feel something is very wrong in the coarseness of the culture, the sexualization of childhood, and the politicization of basic human relationships. There is no way to live life painlessly. What differs in our era is the kind of unhappiness we may face, our interpretation of its cause and meaning, and our response.

Still, these and other anxieties, frustrations, and uncertainties do not add up to generational despondency. (For a comparison with something closer to the real thing, look at the widely publicized recent analyses of the 40 percent spike in blue-collar middle-aged white male suicides reported in, for example, the *Washington Post*, Nov. 2, 2015.) By and large, these are not people who have given up or lost the capacity to enjoy life.

Instead, the situation most nearly responsible for Europe's demographic situation seems almost the reverse of giving up: Westerners are not so much refraining from reproduction as an act of rebellion against society or a gesture of despair as in a Jeffersonian pursuit of happiness. It is not that they don't make sacrifices (often great ones) to provide for children or families or pursue careers. However, they have not chosen (and perhaps have not realistically been offered) the paradigm of giving, sacrificial love within traditional family structures.

In Evelyn Waugh's novel *Brideshead Revisited*, Lord Marchmain returns to England to die after years spent abroad with his mistress, having abandoned

his wife, family, and religious faith. The narrator relates:

I said to the doctor, who was with us daily, "He's got a wonderful will to live, hasn't he?"

"Would you put it like that? I should say rather a great fear of death."

"Is there a difference?"

"Oh dear, yes. He doesn't derive any strength from his fear, you know. It's wearing him out."

Some such process may be at work in our own civilization, which has largely abandoned its rich religious heritage, but grasps tight what it perceives to be the goods of life in a death grip that paradoxically saps its strength.



*"Just what do you mean by 'remarkable recovery,' Doctor?"*

# The Destroyer of Peace

*W. Ross Blackburn*

**E**very election addresses issues crucial to the life of the nation. Typical of years past, the economy, national security, and health care commanded the attention of voters in 2012, and the candidates were expected to propose solutions for each issue. Yet, our economy is not going to be saved simply by changing our tax policy or spending habits, nor is our nation going to be secured by tougher policies toward Iran or Russia.

Although neatly (and with great reductionism) framed as a “women’s rights” issue, abortion will have far more power over the welfare of our country than most of us have imagined. Here’s why.

There is a peculiar passage in the Old Testament relevant to America’s political landscape: “Do not pray for the welfare of this people. . . . I will consume them by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence” (Jer. 14:11–12).

This is unusual, that God would explicitly forbid prayer for his people. Why? What would warrant such determined and irreversible judgment? The answer: “I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of what Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem” (Jer. 15:4). What did Manasseh do? Of all the other wicked kings in Israel and Judah, there is one practice, and only one, unique to Manasseh: the large-scale shedding of innocent blood. Other kings were guilty of shedding innocent blood, but only Manasseh is charged with doing so on a large scale.

The Old Testament tells the rest of the story. As promised, Judah was besieged by Babylon and taken into exile. Their national security was broken, their economy shattered, their health care in ruins. Their hopes as a nation—for safety, prosperity, and health—were gone.

“Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the Lord, to remove out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not pardon” (2 Kings 24:3–4).

## **Intertwined Moral Concerns**

The narrative of Manasseh raises a notion with significant traction in our culture—that of the “single issue” voter, popularly caricatured as so concerned

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about one particular issue that he is blind to, or unconcerned with, others. Shaun Casey, President Obama's former religious advisor, said something interesting back in 2008 concerning the younger generation: "those folks are [not] getting more liberal on abortion or same-sex issues. It just means they're less inclined to be single-issue voters. The moral basket of issues is larger than just abortion and gay marriage." For Casey, the strength of American youth lay in the breadth of their moral concerns.

Certainly the "moral basket" is large. But Casey's comment implies that moral issues can be divided and categorized in such a way that one issue can be dealt with apart from others. But what if, in this large and varied basket, issues are interdependent? What if there are some issues that affect all the others? The fallacy of Casey's perspective is that one cannot be focused and comprehensive at the same time. If there is one rotten apple in the basket, one does not suppose that a focused effort to remove that particular apple is made at the expense of the other apples. There is a particular order of importance that must be respected, for the sake of the whole. Failure to focus will, over time, cause all to be lost.

Is public policy that permits abortion in America on the same moral plane as Manasseh's practice in the Old Testament? It depends on how one views the annual killing of roughly 1.2 million children. The answer to that question, of course, will determine what priority in the moral basket abortion ought to have. Worthy of sober consideration are the words of Nancy Harvey: "Some of us believe that it is wrong to kill innocent people, and this was the evil of Nazi Germany. Others think that Hitler made a mistake in his categories. It is wrong to kill Jews and Gypsies, but acceptable to kill the unborn and severely disabled."

### **Greatest Destroyer**

According to a September Gallup poll, 21 percent of self-identified pro-life Americans said that they would only vote for a candidate who shared their perspective on abortion. That suggests that for up to 79 percent of pro-life voters, abortion is just one of many issues to consider, or perhaps not an important issue at all.

But what if abortion is connected to everything else? What if, like Judah of old, America's national security, economy, health care, and the many other things about which we are rightly concerned are inseparable from abortion? The Old Testament proclaims that the shedding of innocent blood is never a single issue. It is not a zero-sum affair. One does not give up a concern for pressing issues in our time by remembering the unborn. Rather, the implication is that protecting the unborn is actually the way to

begin addressing those other concerns.

Mother Teresa saw this with striking clarity, and articulated the matter in a way that makes clear the connections that 40 years of legal abortion have obscured for many of us:

“I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child—a direct killing of the innocent child—murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? . . . By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And by abortion, the father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. That father is likely to put other women into the same trouble. So abortion just leads to more abortion. Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching the people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. That is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.”

For Mother Teresa, abortion is not a single issue, but gets to the very heart of what it means to be human, and to live with one another. It touches everything else.

### **Mercy & Help**

In reflecting upon the Scripture’s perspective on shedding innocent blood, we would do well to reflect on two matters. Although downplayed in our culture, abortion takes a tremendous toll on those involved, particularly mothers and fathers, and has left much devastation and pain in its wake. Jesus’ words, “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28), are surely directed to those burdened with the guilt of abortion. Additionally, the Church does well to emulate the example of Mother Teresa, and even to echo her own plea: “Please don’t kill the child. I want the child. Please give me the child. I am willing to accept any child who would be aborted, and to give that child to a married couple who will love the child, and be loved by the child.”

If Mother Teresa could save over 3,000 children from abortion in Calcutta, as she claimed, surely we can do likewise. There are, of course, many who do this—pregnancy centers, churches, and other families and individuals who open their homes to foster or adopt children—but there is more to be done. In our day, this is one of the ways we fulfill the biblical command to “defend the fatherless, and plead for the widow” (Is. 1:17).

Being a “single issue” voter need not mean that one is narrow. For instance, to say that I will not vote for a racist, or a sex offender, regardless of his platform, does not make me narrow-minded or thoughtless. We all have

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certain non-negotiables—single issues—that disqualify someone from our support, regardless of other factors. The question is whether abortion should be one of them.

Abortion is not a single issue. And the Lord will not permit it to continue indefinitely. The single issue is the welfare of our nation.



*Mother Teresa and Henry Hyde peruse HLR in 1981.*

# The Dynamics of Popular Intellectual Change

James Hitchcock

**T**he discrediting of inherited beliefs is a crucial project of contemporary modernist liberalism, with openness to the new taken as a necessary sign of authenticity. Familiar positions are often suddenly reversed, as defenders of the status quo become outsiders.

The process is endless, with the various aspects of the sexual revolution, particularly abortion and homosexuality, the most dramatic of such reversals. “Trans-sexualism,” for example, seemed to be merely erotic science fiction, until it suddenly emerged as a reality that is already beyond rational discussion. Polygamy is obviously the next issue on the agenda, and beyond that lies the inevitable revival of the campaign to legitimize sexual relations between adults and children. (This campaign was previously derailed at the beginning of this century by the unexpected discovery that it was a significant problem among Catholic priests.)

Despite clichés about pluralism, society is never in a state of equilibrium with regard to competing ideologies. Ideas are either in the ascendancy or in decline; they cannot remain stationary, and changes in popular belief tend to follow a predictable process, which I describe below.

*The avant-garde.* At any given moment virtually every possible belief is held by some people, perhaps a numerically insignificant minority. This minority view may seem absurd or pernicious to the majority, but modernist culture cherishes the avant-garde as the creative force in society, a sign of the culture’s vitality.

*Exposure.* Attention by the media is readily bestowed, because the avant-garde appear to be more interesting and dramatic than those they seek to discredit, and because they seem to represent cultural vitality. The unfamiliar soon loses its ability to shock and becomes thinkable.

*Timeliness.* Victor Hugo’s famous pronouncement about the power of “an idea whose time has come” is definitive, but what makes an idea suddenly timely is somewhat elusive. Perhaps most often it has to do with dramatic events. With abortion in the early 1960s, it was the reported dilemma of married women who, for allegedly therapeutic reasons, flew to Sweden to terminate their pregnancies. The AIDS epidemic—perhaps the only politicized disease in history—aroused sympathy for a hitherto widely scorned group of people, who were portrayed as mere victims of a process over which they

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had no control. (Funds solicited in order to “fight AIDS” were often used to finance homosexual propaganda.)

*The burden of history.* Unlike the avant-garde, established ideas and institutions are plagued by the mere fact of possessing a history. Since no people is free of crimes and blunders, history can easily become a source of demoralizing self-doubt. Burkean conservatism holds that established beliefs ought not to require continuous rational defense. This means that the avant-garde usually confronts moral conservatives who are unprepared for battle and are unpreparedly forced to fight a purely defensive war. As late as the 1960s, for example, few people saw any need to justify laws against abortion.

*A new history.* The public is then told that what they have believed or learned about their past is misleading, even mendacious; there is a suppressed history that is now being revealed, broadly the now-prevalent account of American history in terms of racism and sexism. In the push to legalize abortion, for example, legends about “millions of back-alley abortions” were continually repeated; later, the public was offered a similar diet of stories about atrocities allegedly committed against homosexuals.

Once such stories have been widely disseminated, they become mythological, to the point where it ceases to matter whether they are true, as with the repeated tale of Matthew Shepherd, who is falsely said to have been brutally murdered because of his homosexuality. This historical revisionism goes beyond the merely anecdotal—in *Roe v. Wade* some historians submitted a brief to the Supreme Court that seriously misrepresented the history of the subject. In today’s campus wars false (or at best unverified) rumors are continually spread, in order to justify disruptive actions.

*Sanitizing the narrative.* Besides deciding what is to be included in the new official story, the gatekeepers of public opinion also in effect declare out of bounds all discussion of things that might tend to undermine that story. Thus it is forbidden to point out that AIDS was often spread through highly irresponsible personal behavior or that relatively few homosexual “marriages” are in accord with the traditional idea of the family.

*The therapeutic mind.* The avant-garde justifies new ideas primarily through the claim that old beliefs cause suffering. Despite the liberal dogma that Americans are narrow-minded and intolerant, in a heavily hedonistic culture most people are in fact sensitive to cries of ostensible pain, and to an extent accept the premise that each person’s self-defined happiness is the highest good.

*The Stockholm Syndrome.* Those ostensibly charged with the responsibility of upholding established beliefs may develop a kind of admiration for their adversaries, who seem to possess clear-sightedness, strength of will, and firmness of purpose that the defenders lack. The new movement keeps up a

steady barrage on all fronts, and the supposed defenders of the bastion sense a lack of comparable will and resources within themselves. University faculty and administrators in particular have for decades cultivated the habit of automatically ceding authority to students who claim the high ground for themselves and who condemn their elders with relentless moralism. There is sometimes a kind of *frisson* generated on the fringes of radical groups, an almost palpable flow of electricity from the new to the old.

*The “moderate middle.”* Some categories of people—journalists, professors, clergy, even some politicians—enjoy the image of being thoughtful, balanced, and temperate and therefore act as the intellectual referees of the culture, separating acceptable from untenable ideas. They are primarily responsible for moving new ideas out of the realm of the avant-garde and giving them respectability. In a society increasingly shaped by court decisions, judges especially play this key role.

*Conversions.* Many in this judicious middle quickly move beyond tolerance to active espousal, a move that radically shifts the entire axis of discussion. Prior to 1973, physicians were struck off the medical rolls for performing abortions, but after *Roe v. Wade*, organized professional groups endorsed the practice. Almost overnight psychologists went from defining homosexuality as a disorder to affirming it as healthy and normal. In both cases liberal clergy transformed the action from a sin into a virtue.

*The myth of inevitability.* Here judges again play the key role. Once the elite have prepared the way, the new ideas gain popular acceptance largely to the degree that the public is persuaded that the victory has in effect already been won, that continuing opposition is futile, that opponents are people who have to be “dragged kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century.” Although most people may be morally conservative, few are prepared to fight what they perceive as futile rearguard actions. (Paradoxically, changes are rationalized both as inevitable and as freely chosen.)

*Vindication.* For many people the success of a new idea itself becomes proof of its legitimacy, its moral superiority over the old. Why else would it have triumphed? The new establishment claims the right to avenge old grievances, as in the fierce determination to remove all legal protection from those who disapprove of homosexuality on religious grounds.

There is a kind of unwritten scorecard on which the fortunes of various movements and ideas are charted, a scorecard that is important because, half-consciously, the referees maintain different sets of rules for rising and falling movements.

*Self-fulfillment/self-sacrifice.* Resentment of the “oppressiveness” of traditional groups—the family, the church, the school—does not occur while

the group is at the height of its authority but when it has already compromised that authority. What is resented are the remnants of a once much heavier burden. But self-discipline, even self-sacrifice, are considered admirable when practiced on behalf of a rising movement.

*Community/individual.* Individualism—each person’s sense of being ultimately autonomous—tends to emerge from the breakdown of social groups, in contrast to an ideal of communalism that is experienced by rising groups. Thus traditional society is condemned for restricting personal freedom, and abortion severs the sacred ties between parent and child, even as homosexuals sacralize their own sexual relations and avant-garde groups enforce group identity, especially race and gender.

*Cynicism/credulity.* Disenchantment with a declining group slides into cynicism—the traditional family is a mere cover for male privilege, American history is a record of centuries of imperialism. But otherwise-sophisticated people accept a rising group’s idealistic claims at face value—leftists of all kinds will create a better world; they do not simply lust for power.

*Passive/aggressive rhetoric.* There is no surer sign of a group’s decline than the reluctance of its spokesmen to talk confidently and boldly about its beliefs. Their traditional rhetoric begins to embarrass even many of their own members and is discarded as smug and insensitive.

But a more diffident rhetoric—low-keyed, soft-spoken, tentative, even apologetic—is unable to inspire even the group’s own members, much less to make it credible to outsiders. Meanwhile, rising groups are permitted to employ rhetoric that is aggressive, extravagant, insulting toward enemies, and grandiose in its claims.

*Sophistication/innocence.* A group in decline experiences a growing sense of irony about itself and even practices self-mockery. Rising groups, in contrast, possess enthusiasm and unshakable self-righteousness.

*Complexity/simplicity.* One of the basic dogmas of modernism is the belief that reality is so obscure and complex that true understanding is difficult to achieve. Modernism requires an agnosticism that works to erode traditional beliefs, making them “simplistic.”

Rising groups of necessity eschew such a perception of reality, lest they lose their momentum, loosen their hold on the public conscience, and weaken the allegiance of their own adherents. Maintaining a willfully naive view of reality, they claim to perceive simple but profound truths that society prefers not to acknowledge.

*Ecumenism/dogmatism.* Liberalism in theory insists that people be diffident about their beliefs, refrain from aggressively proselytizing, recognize broad areas of agreement between themselves and others, and repent the dogmatism

and rigidities of their pasts. An image of negativity—moralistic, restrictive, condemnatory, puritanical—is a severe handicap.

But rising groups succeed precisely because they claim to have the truth. They are messianic, apocalyptic, dogmatic, and intolerant, and they do not hesitate to pass sweeping moral judgments on whole classes of people or on the entire history of a nation. Feminists, black militants, and homosexuals do not initiate “ecumenical” discussions with those whom they regard as wrong, even as evil, and often they are not even loath to use coercion, such as disrupting meetings or shouting down speakers.

*Intellectual freedom.* An earlier liberal consensus held that thought and art must be free of imposed orthodoxies, and self-consciously modernist people still feel virtually obliged to stand in judgment on established beliefs. Rising groups’ claim to possess authoritative truth inspires thought and art that are openly propagandistic, solely intended to support group ideology. Heresy is quickly identified and condemned.

*The paranoid style.* The historian Richard Hofstadter noted the persistence of the “paranoid style” in American history: the tendency of particular groups (right or left) to interpret events in terms of conspiracies and to identify certain groups as scapegoats for misfortune. While in theory a sophisticated society frowns on such conspiratorial theories, rising groups tend to see history precisely in those terms (men against women, capitalists against workers, whites against blacks).

*Procedure/substance.* Sophisticated societies develop complex procedures for dealing with problems, procedures that can take on a life of their own and even become sacred (fair trials, free expression). Traditional liberals regarded violations of these procedures as worse than any evil such violations sought to remedy. Rising groups invoke these procedures only so long as they benefit from them, then in effect negate them in the name of a greater good (curtailing free expression in order to prevent the spread of “hateful” ideas).

*Ordinary/special language.* A declining movement, sensitive to its failure to communicate adequately with the larger society, may attempt to expunge special language from its public statements and even from its internal discourse. Liberal religions, which have essentially abandoned theology merely in order to echo prevailing secular liberal opinion, are the classic examples.

But rising groups almost always employ a special language, which they force the public to learn and even to adopt, because they believe they possess a unique truth that the public needs to embrace (“gay,” for example). The youth counterculture of the 1960s introduced any number of new words and phrases into the adult vocabulary, and white adults paid both blacks and

young whites the supreme homage of imitation of speech, music, dress, language, and mannerisms.

The practice of abortion has a protected status in American society that was unthinkable in 1960, a status achieved through the process described above. But in another sense it is the pro-life movement whose story is more remarkable, precisely because it has endured, and even grown stronger, in defiance of what often seemed like an irresistible juggernaut of social change.

In one sense, although the abortion revolution was not foreseen in 1960, those who soon became the adherents of the pro-life movement were prepared for it without realizing it—prepared in two quite distinct ways.

On one side was a substantial body of moral reasoning, dating back centuries, that understood precisely why abortion is wrong, a body of reasoning that has only been reinforced by modern scientific discoveries about the life of the fetus. The pro-abortion case requires ignoring the unborn child almost entirely and concentrating on the interests of the parents.

At the same time the reality of abortion was vivid and personal especially to many women, who became the backbone of the pro-life movement. Being pro-abortion required a new degree of moral callousness, as by the shame-faced defenders of the sale of infant body parts or the casual dismissal of ultra-sound images.

The pro-life movement has endured above all because it has never lost sight of its moral foundations. It goes far beyond Burkean conservatism, in that it does not attempt to preserve familiar patterns of life, and thereby preserve social harmony, but insists on a transcendent truth that of necessity sometimes disrupts that harmony. The ultimate strength of the movement is its adherents' conviction that they have no choice except to continue the struggle, no matter how formidable the obstacles may be. In Mother Teresa's often-quoted words, "I am called not to be successful but to be faithful."

# The Godless Survivors of Abortion

*Joe Bissonnette*

**M**Meet Michael and Jessica. They are not a couple, but at another time and place, they might have been. According to babycenter.com, Michael and Jessica were the most common baby names in 1995. They are both 20. They both love Starbucks; in fact Michael is a full-time barista and Jessica often indulges between classes. What else do these young people have in common? In what ways have they been shaped by their culture? And how do they differ from their parents' generation?

Since 1973 almost 60,000,000 unborn babies in America have been aborted. Their loves and labors and prayers which should have been, which should have cascaded forth in a multiplier of holy abundance, will never be. As a rule it is unhealthy to dwell too long on the path not taken, but the babies done in by abortion are not merely an unrealized possibility: They *were*, and then they were killed. They are the dead among us.

There is an intrinsic psychological insecurity affecting all those born since the legalization of abortion. Unlike their parents, who entered a world where it was against the law to kill babies in the womb, Michael and Jessica—and more than 150,000,000 others like them—were born in the age of abortion on demand. Each of their births was contingent upon the good will of a mother who could have just as easily decided to kill her unborn child instead. Because of this contingency, more than half of Americans today are living in the shadow of an existential doubt.

Parents, as the taproot of our being, the flesh from which we are woven, establish the horizons of our moral understanding. Hillary Clinton was wrong when she said it takes a village to raise a child. It is the family that is the basic building block of society, and parents are the foundation of the family. Their love for us undergirds our psychological well-being. Even when parenthood is compromised by such grave foundational corruption as legalized abortion, childhood dependence prompts us to adopt the moral precepts of our parents. Though we might accept or reject these as we grow up, it is always with reference to those parental horizons that our own world views come to be. We inherit our parents' sins, even and perhaps especially when those sins are against us.

The existential crisis conferred on the surviving children of the abortion era is necessarily nihilistic and atheistic. It is nihilistic because it causes

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deep personal insecurity, but also because it undercuts our most basic instinct: The first principle that animates all living things is the perpetuation of their species. In a well-ordered culture children are the greatest natural good because they are the means by which the human species is preserved. A culture that kills its children is both homicidal and suicidal. While technological advances and material progress—including ever more extravagant forms of entertainment—can temporarily mask this inevitability with a veneer of optimism, over time they lose their power to distract. Today, a rapidly growing number of young people are declaring themselves atheist because the unrestrained abortion license—a first principle of contemporary culture—is inherently atheistic. Atheistic because in traducing natural law, the abortion ethos seals off avenues of transcendence.

**M**ichael and Jessica get along easily with their parents, who have never really made any demands on them. On the contrary, their parents have been overly solicitous of their needs and overly eager to be their confidants and friends. If asked, Michael and Jessica would say that their parents love them because love is a word they use all the time. It is a non-specific love, one not directed toward God or truth or goodness. There is an unmistakable ennui when they speak of their parents as friends. A hollowness. Michael and Jessica are not passionate and rebellious, but neither are they gentle and respectful. If one were to describe their personalities as representative of their generation it would be using words such as passive, disengaged, dogmatically tolerant, almost Buddhist. There is no fire in their bellies, no hint of any desire to break away from their parents or to imitate their parents by starting families of their own. There is an unspoken covenant between parents and adult children to stop the clock and perpetuate childhood indefinitely. Childless adult children, especially males, often live in their parents' home and often accompany their parents on cruises and trips to Disney.

The abiding guilt of our own involvement in the abortion regime, and the foundational insecurity of having been born into a culture in which it would have been permissible to kill us, reduce our moral natures to a binary calculus: victim-survivor, loser-winner, dead-alive. We have become cool and loveless with each other; there is no rich complexity within us. We perceive no seeds of hope within tragedy; crisis is meticulously avoided. We are spiritually one-dimensional, even slothful; both passive in indulging the bad, and risk-averse in pursuing the good.

*America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012* is a summary of statistical data compiled by the United States Census Bureau. It provides numbers and trend lines for things all of us have noticed in our neighborhoods,

in our families, and in ourselves, but writ large on the culture. The most shocking revelation is that for the first time in history “single adult living alone” is the most common type of household in America. We are deeply lonely and becoming less capable of relationships. The dramatic decrease in the numbers of people in their twenties and thirties getting married is not news. Marriage has been devastated by no-fault divorce, a culture of promiscuity and pornography, and of course by our diminished capacity for trust and love and covenant in the age of abortion. What is shocking is the dramatic decrease in the numbers of young people even choosing to live together.

The final stages of the sexual revolution and abortion culture have not only wrecked love and marriage. Many are too wounded for relationships of any sort, including low-commitment cohabiting. Our growing isolation, punctuated by an estrangement from the opposite sex, particularly among young men, has been well documented, and has given rise to a cultural shorthand to describe a generation of missing men—“basement dwellers,” “failure to launch,” “herbivore men.” This in turn has led to a vortex of reinforcing social pathologies. Not sufficiently noticed, but hugely significant, is the fact that today only 40% of university students are men.

Michael does not attend college, as he would have done in the past so that he could get a well-paying job to support Jessica and their children. In fact, Michael has not even made overtures towards Jessica, though Jessica might well be willing to give away the benefits of the marital covenant for free. Instead, Michael, still at home, fills his nights with porn and the vicarious heroism of video games while Jessica completes more courses, and becomes more managerial and less personal.

It is a dark picture, and history tells of a number of great civilizations overcome by dark forces. Perhaps things are too far gone and all that is left is to watch the sad end play out. But then again . . . it might seem like the thinnest of reeds, but there may be hidden springs of hope within Michael and Jessica.

One of the great revelations of parenthood seems in fact to belie much of what I have argued up to this point. The most shocking discovery of parenthood is that children are not just our projections, they are themselves persons. We did not create our children, and, in a series of never-ending surprises, we are forced to see that neither do they belong to us. Even the names of our children may be more something we discover than choose.

Michael was not just the most popular baby’s name in 1995, it was the most popular baby’s name in America in the 20th century. And Michael may be the answer to the hubris that has been our undoing: It is the only name to

include a question mark. It means “Who is like God?” and is taken from Michael’s humble defiance of the proud Satan. Though Michael was an angel, a pure spirit, a messenger of God, he is also counted among the saints, perhaps because his encounter with Satan is so deeply human.

Jessica is the feminized version of Jesse. Jesse is the father of David, the boy who rises from obscurity to defeat the giant Goliath and become king. He is the root out of which comes Christ. After Michael, David is the second most popular boy’s name of the 20th century. David played music to calm the madness of Saul and he danced before God. But King David also seduced Bathsheba and when she became pregnant attempted to trick her husband Uriah into thinking the child was his own. When this did not work David orchestrated the murder of the righteous Uriah. It is one of the ugliest sequences in Scripture and yet David is counted as a hero and a saint, and it is from Solomon, a later child of David and Bathsheba, that the line leading to Christ is drawn. God enters into our filthy lives, our human brokenness. The most recurrent theme in all of Scripture is God brings good out of evil.

**L**ast night I read a story in our local paper about a transgendered kindergarten teacher who was honored by the teacher’s union and school board for integrating her male alter-ego into her classroom. When she chooses to be a man, she wears a bowling shirt with the name Paul. When she has the children do stereotypically male tasks, like building a bridge, she appears as Paul. They ask him for help, but he is inept. She then reappears as a woman and provides the help they need, shattering the gender- role stereotype. Stories like this abound. At first they are terrifying, and then mind-numbing, but Michael and Jessica accept them as signs of the liberation their godless generation has been taught to seek. They accept these stories—and yet they don’t. They are defenders of the new orthodoxy, but they are also beginning to show a bristling contempt for political correctness. We are not merely the products of our parents. There is a human nature—a natural law—that abides, and the more it is suppressed the more forcefully will it re-emerge.

Abortion culture is the darkest psychological legacy imaginable and every day there is more shocking evidence that we have entered into a death spiral from which we do not deserve to recover. Perhaps history will have its way. But hidden within it all there is still some flicker of hope. There is always some flicker of hope.

# An Inspiring Evening

◆ THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW ◆



Thursday, October 22, 2015  
THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB, NYC

## 13th ANNUAL GREAT DEFENDER OF LIFE DINNER

◆ HONOREES ◆

Mr. Micheal Flaherty  
and  
Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz

◆ REMARKS ◆

William McGurn  
and  
Gregory Pfundstein

◆ ALSO FEATURING ◆

Maryland Jumbo Lump Crabcakes  
Seared Beef Tenderloin  
Seasonal Fruit Crisp & Creme Chantilly



Grace Maffucci, daughter of Maria McFadden Maffucci, leads guests in “The Star Spangled Banner.”

“O say can you see, by  
the dawn’s early light . . .”

**“Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts . . .”**



*Invocations were made by Reverend Samaras Gross, Director of Public Relations for the New York Hispanic Clergy Association, and Father Kazimierz Kowalski, a priest of the Archdiocese of New York and Human Life Foundation board member.*

**“Q**uiz question: How many senators are in the New York State Senate? There are 63. That means you need 32 votes to get a majority on any question. In 2002 a man was elected to New York’s 32nd Senate District and it is unlikely anyone at the time could have predicted the outsized influence that Senator Rubén Díaz would wield as the 32nd vote on so many issues over the years. For our purposes tonight, we are particularly interested in the influence that Senator Díaz would have over questions of life and death for New York’s most vulnerable citizens: the unborn and the elderly. This is why tonight we honor Senator Díaz as a Great Defender of Life.”

**— Greg Pfundstein, Chiaroscuro Foundation**



*Maria McFadden Maffucci, Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz, and Greg Pfundstein*

**“W**e have to start electing and supporting those pro-life individuals regardless of their political affiliation. We should do it. We could do it. We must do it. Let’s keep up the fight!”

**—Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz**

“Now ask yourself this: How many men in the movie business can say they produce films for adults—I almost said ‘adult films’—they’d be proud to watch with their children? Mike [Flaherty] is one of the few who can make that boast. His productions include *The Chronicles of Narnia . . . Charlotte’s Web*, *The Giver*, and *Because of Winn Dixie*. Mike also helped make possible *Amazing Grace*—the story of William Wilberforce’s long, difficult but ultimately successful campaign against slavery in Britain. He also helped produce *Waiting for Superman*, a documentary about an American public education system that is consigning whole generations of black and Latino children to life on the margins of American prosperity. In short, Mike is a man who has literally transformed the injunction to love our neighbors as ourselves into art.”



William McGurn

—William McGurn, *The Wall Street Journal*



Micheal Flaherty with Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, who presented a proclamation in honor of both Mr. Flaherty and Senator Reverend Díaz as Great Defender of Life honorees.

“John Newton was blind when he was a Christian, because he was just following the conventions of his day. But things turned around for him and the man who was responsible for trading slaves wrote the greatest hymn of freedom that our country has ever known. I think the same is true here as we continue to be able to change hearts and minds through the *Human Life Review*, which has been the intellectual engine of the life movement since 1974.”

—Micheal Flaherty

GREAT DEFENDER OF LIFE DINNER 2015



*Jonathan Hendersbott and Elena Kurnosova*



*Maria McFadden Maffucci and Michael Flaberty*



*Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz and friends*



*Connie Marsbner, of HLF's  
Defender of Life Society*



*HLR's 2014 Great  
Defender of Life Kristan  
Hawkins and daughter Grace*



*HLF Board member Pat O'Brien  
with senior editor Mary Meehan*



*Table Sponsor Walter Russell, Jr. with Grace and  
Anna Maffucci and Catherine Montemarano*



*At left, Ida Paz, Rose Flynn DeMaio,  
Chris Hanson and Chris Alles*

## A Great Review

Last week I attended the Human Life Foundation's annual "Great Defender of Life" dinner, held in New York City. Founded in 1974 by the late James P. McFadden to promote and help provide alternatives to abortion, the Human Life Foundation is one of the great organizations promoting what Pope St. John Paul II called the "Culture of Life." Principally, it publishes the *Human Life Review*, a quarterly journal now in its 41st consecutive year of publication. The *Review* is an academic-quality journal devoted to discussions of legal, philosophical, medical, scientific, and moral perspectives on all life issues, as well as underlying issues of family and society. (To learn more, visit their website at [www.humanlifereview.com](http://www.humanlifereview.com))



Fr. John McCartney

The Foundation is ably run today by Maria McFadden Maffucci, the daughter of Jim McFadden and Faith Abbot McFadden. Faith, who died in 2011, was a convert to Catholicism, a writer in her own right, and a senior editor of the *Human Life Review* for many years. I was privileged to know the McFaddens through my late sister, Dorothy. Maria Maffucci continues her parents' great pro-life legacy today.

One of this year's "Great Defender of Life" honorees was Micheal (sic) Flaherty, an educator and the co-founder of Walden Media, a film production company whose releases include *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *The Giver*, and *Amazing Grace*, among other popular and family-friendly films. In accepting his award Flaherty spoke about his desire to make education fun and accessible for children, especially those in poor neighborhoods, as well as his desire to make moral films that are thoughtful, entertaining, and which parents can watch alongside their children without being embarrassed.

The other honoree of the evening was State Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz, who has represented the 32nd District (South Bronx) in the New York State Senate since 2002. An ordained minister of the Church of God, Rev. Díaz is also the President of the N.Y. Hispanic Clergy Organization. Throughout his career in politics, he has been an outspoken and courageous defender of life, recently in the forefront of the fight to defeat New York's legislative attempt to radically expand abortion.

The New York State "Reproductive Health Act," strongly supported by Governor Cuomo, seeks to have abortion declared a "fundamental right" in New York State. This bill would prohibit even basic and widely supported

protections, such as parental consent and limits on government funding of abortion. The proposed law would allow any “health care practitioner” to perform an abortion (this means abortions could be performed by non-physicians, like midwives). It would also enshrine late-term abortion in New York State law, jeopardize any agency that does not refer for abortion (like crisis pregnancy centers), and seriously threaten conscience protections for hospitals and medical professionals. (For more information, go to [www.nysrighttolife.org](http://www.nysrighttolife.org).)

Each year this bill passes in the NYS Assembly and is defeated by exactly one vote in the Senate: that of Sen. Díaz. If not for him, New York would have one of the most radical and dangerous abortion laws in the country. Sen. Díaz gave a rousing acceptance speech that had the crowd on its feet a number of times. He, a Democrat, spoke about the difficulty of breaking with his own party, and called for all voters to support pro-life politicians regardless of party affiliation. Most interestingly, he also asked for prayers for the Pope and the bishops meeting at the Synod on the Family in Rome. He said that all people, regardless of their religion, look to the Catholic Church for leadership in the pro-life arena, and he prayed that the Church would issue a strong and clear defense of human life and family values at the end of the Synod. Sen. Díaz, who is black, also spoke of the “right to life” as “the great civil rights issue of our time.”

It was a truly inspiring evening, to be with so many people who are actively engaged in the fight against the “Culture of Death.” Personally, I found great hope in listening to these two courageous warriors who are defending life in such different ways, yet with the same passion and joy.

—Fr. John McCartney, “Pastor’s Page,” *St. Mary’s Church, Roslyn, NY*

# Notes on Campus Indoctrination

Chris Rostenberg

“**P**ro-life is just a bunch of men who want to punish women for having sex,” declared one of my feminist professors at Purchase College, State University of New York.

While discussing abortion with my feminist college advisor, I asked, “Before I was born, maybe I didn’t have legal rights, but I was still me, right?” She answered, “No, Chris, you did not exist until you were born.” Before my birth, my pregnant mother had *something* alive in her womb which only *became* me at birth.

A third professor, this one at City College, claimed in a lecture that abortion did not kill a person, but when a baby was born, it could be said to have been inside his or her mother “retroactively.” Thus, pro-choice-to-kill activists use terms like “forced motherhood,” and write books like Garrett James Hardin’s *Mandatory Motherhood: The True Meaning of “Right to Life.”* So, too, pro-choicers pretend that abortion *prevents* babies rather than kills them. In truth, abortion is not about reproductive rights or reproductive wrongs; it’s not about reproduction period—it’s about homicide, prenatal homicide.

In one of my classes, a law professor asked, “Is it acceptable for a woman to get an abortion if her life is endangered?” He followed up with, “What if the woman says she will commit suicide if denied abortion?” When he was teaching *Roe v. Wade*, this professor put that ruling in the same category as *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized contraception. Would it not have been more appropriate to compare *Roe* to *Dred Scott*, since both decisions deny legal status to a whole class of human beings?

*Roe v. Wade* contains a secret that abortion advocates have been hiding from the public for decades. On a superficial reading of the law, it would seem that states can make late-term abortion illegal, because *Roe v. Wade* does in fact stipulate they can do so—as long as their laws include exceptions for life and health of the mother. However, the Court’s same-day ruling in a companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, defined health of the mother in such broad terms as to effectively make abortion on demand legal through all nine months of pregnancy. So while many states have made late-term abortion illegal, all

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Chris Rostenberg is a “pro-compromiser,” opposing late prenatal homicide while remaining silent on early abortion and the hard cases. He intends to write a graphic novel (adult comic book) about the nine month pro-choice holocaust. Chris writes from New York.

state laws are superseded by *Roe/Doë*, meaning the states haven't really made any abortion illegal at all.

Does this nine-month loophole mean that (relatively) many women get abortions in the third trimester? Of course not. But that's not the point. The point is that the extremism of *Roe* and *Doë* determines the way the issue is discussed: "Pro-life" is at one pole, "pro-choice" is at the other. To be "pro-choice" means to support abortion rights throughout pregnancy. The term cannot refer to any other position that is not pro-life, say, for instance, one that would prohibit abortion after the first trimester.

Many people who call themselves "pro-choice" are really "pro-hybrid," meaning they accept some anti-abortion arguments. I urge pro-hybrids to change their position to my own stand, which I describe as "pro-compromise." I oppose late-term abortion, am silent on early abortion, as well as on exceptions for rape and incest. I support abortion only when it is necessary to save a woman's life (which virtually never happens).

It is hard to get people to accept the reality of the law as it stands because people generally are not expecting Supreme Court justices to deceive them. Also, people have trouble believing abortion is legal until birth because they don't want to believe it. Pro-choicers tell themselves that if late-term abortion is already illegal, they do not have to address it. But shouldn't abortion advocates have to say which abortions they do and don't support, regardless of the law?

I gave a lecture in one of my classes in which I tried to explain the loophole that makes abortion legal until birth. Later, a fellow student told me that the professor, who was sitting outside of my range of sight, was shaking her head "No" to the class as I spoke. Not one of my professors exposed the Supreme Court's misrepresentation concerning nine-month abortion in any of my classes. (Due to serious illness, I attended six colleges before earning my Bachelor's in Political Science.)

Once, I caught the health-center staff at one college misrepresenting the law, claiming that late-term abortion could be made illegal. I wrote an article about it for the school paper. But the student editor haughtily told me I had gotten it wrong and proceeded to quote the passage in *Roe* I mentioned above, perhaps not realizing he was defending a myth. *I had quoted that passage in my article!* The editor included a drawing of a distorted embryo, uncurled to expose its "fishlike traits." He also referred to me in print as an "overgrown fetus." This editor embraced the status quo nine-month law, but at the same time said he opposed extremism.

I interviewed five women college students on tape and asked them if they were pro-choice, pro-life, or something else. All said they were pro-choice,

sometimes enthusiastically so. I asked how late in pregnancy they thought abortion should be legal. "I never thought of that!" one woman exclaimed. None thought nine months was appropriate. One woman said two *weeks*. I wrote about this, and exposed the law again for another school paper, the SUNY Purchase Free Press. I was censored. The editor said he was pro-choice, his friends were pro-choice, and he could attest that pro-choicers were fully aware that abortion was legal until birth, so there was no need for my article. It was frustrating in the extreme. I let the matter drop. I let them win.

Around this time, the local Gannett newspaper published a piece containing the fallacy that late-term abortion could be made illegal by the states. I submitted a letter to the editor correcting the error, and it was published. I then xeroxed my letter and photos of large aborted babies and made posters, which I hung up around the school. They were torn down within hours. On one, somebody had drawn smiley faces on the dead, twisted children and wrote Zzz's above their heads as if they were sleeping comic-book characters. Scrawled on another was, "People are dying on their feet and we're debating the humanity of zygotes!"

**O**n five occasions at three different schools I addressed my peers in oral reports, getting more effective with each speech. The first time, the professor allowed students to repeatedly interrupt me with questions and comments. During my report I showed part of *Eclipse of Reason*, the documentary film that graphically depicts a second-trimester abortion. One professor refused to watch the disturbing film. Another refused to allow me to show it. One student upset me when he described the violence as "cool."

Can our universities truly be considered places of higher education when they so misrepresent the defining moral issue of our day? It's not just that I was censored in colleges and the educators were biased. The pro-choice position was simply beyond debate, unworthy of questioning. You could major in Black Studies, Women's Studies, Hebrew Studies, etc., but you could not take a single class in which pictures of aborted babies were shown, or abortion was described as the killing of a child. Academics, surprisingly, are among the first to be brainwashed, not the last, because they consume so much information. Propaganda tells people what they want to hear, or *doesn't* tell them what they *don't* want to hear, and pro-choice banalities are often more palatable than the truth. This topic makes imposters out of doctors, journalists, and educators.

The academy is not the only segment of society that is covering up pro-choice crimes; the psychiatric community is doing it as well. I have a mental illness, and I was repeatedly censored by therapists and others in the mental

health field for talking about abortion. In December, 2013, I had an essay, a companion to this one, published on the *Human Life Review* blog, in which I detailed abuse I had experienced in day programs, outpatient and inpatient therapy, group therapy, one-on-one therapy, social clubs, and halfway houses.

Thoughts of pre-birth infanticide tormented me. I would imagine an abortionist using his tools to crush my testicles and tear them off. Then I would imagine a broken baby floating around in my belly. Are these extremely emotional interpretations of pre-birth infanticide? Of course—but they are infinitely more in tune with what happens during an abortion than claims of “reproductive rights”—and I don’t think you can disagree unless you’ve seen those five minutes of *Eclipse of Reason*.

At the time, I believed that just as I would be obliged to speak up if someone used the “N” word, I was obliged to object if somebody slighted the unborn or their mothers. For example, if a pro-choicer objected to the torture of terrorists, I would ask why he or she supported the torture of unborn babies. I am more careful about choosing my battles today. In any case, post-abortive women who have disturbing thoughts like mine are often not heard in the mental health field.

What is going on here? How can the issue of prenatal homicide lead to such professional malpractice? I think we are witnessing a failure of the public to display a high level of maturity and candor, which is what this issue calls for. The abortion phenomenon has filtered people of character out of positions of power from every corner of our society for over two generations. It is ironic that pro-choicers go to war against their young—after all, they infantilize themselves. The result of all this lying is a population that is in little position to run a democracy.

Prenatal homicide is tolerated not because it is in fact acceptable, but because it is so terrible people find it hard to wrap their minds around it. It’s not so much that people support abortion and don’t want to talk about it—rather they avoid contemplating the reality of it and therefore fail to see that engaging in such horror could never be justified as “a woman’s right.” Pro-choicers believe baby-killing is right and talking about it is wrong. Open discussion threatens those who have killed their own children or have helped kill those of others—and voting for nine-month pro-choice politicians is one way of doing the latter. Abortion/homicide denial is the defining philosophy of our day. Killing babies drives individuals and societies insane.

In fact, in this environment of abortion distortions, very few women are making free informed choices to abort. They are being coerced by pro-choice deceivers into destroying their little ones. It’s a classic bait and switch: Women who believe pro-choice lies are choosing to “terminate potential life” and

getting dead children. When you can't say abortion kills a baby, you also can't say abortion is not a medical treatment. Post-abortion syndrome, the abortion/breast-cancer connection, and dangerous, uninspected, "front-alley" abortion clinics all go unexposed. Women who regret their abortions go unheard.

I advise college students who face problems like the ones I mention here to contact Students for Life because this organization specializes in fighting on behalf of pro-life students on campus. Visit their website for ideas on how to start or promote a pro-life club at your school and, when considering where to go to college, ask SFL for advice on which institutions are most sympathetic to our movement. You can give lectures to your classes and clubs. Show *Eclipse of Reason*, *Maafa 21*—about black genocide and abortion—and the double documentary, *Abortion: The Inside Story/Meet the Abortion Providers*. All of these videos are available free on YouTube.

**L**earn from my experience and save your breath—understand that the myths surrounding this issue are too big for the medium of spoken dialogue; try lectures and the written word instead. For information when composing your presentations, I strongly recommend Randy Alcorn's accessible book, *Pro-Life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments*, Rachel MacNair's revolutionary anthology *Pro-Life Feminism: Yesterday and Today*, William Brennan's quotable *The Abortion Holocaust*, and Gregg Cunningham's online essay "Why Abortion Is Genocide." Subscribe to LifeNews.com and the *Human Life Review*. If you comprehend the basics of this issue, you will be light-years ahead of your peers—and usually your instructors!

If you want to write for the school newspaper, I advise you to work on making friends and allies with the editors before springing your pro-life articles on them. You might want to start by addressing less controversial issues that relate to prenatal homicide, for instance, how your school treats pregnant and parenting students, whether the health center refers pregnant women for abortions, and if it carries Planned Parenthood propaganda. Planned Parenthood has produced "sex education literature" aimed at young people, instructing them that if they have the AIDS virus, they have the right to have sex with people without warning them of their HIV status first. Also, in a brochure titled "Healthy, Happy and Hot," PP advises that raping an unconscious person is "not okay." See my four-part series in the *Westchester Guardian* (which began on April 17, 2014) and read the PP brochure itself online. Remember that if you make five good points in your writing, and one gaffe, your opponents will make your work all about the mistake.

Don't allow yourself to be censored. If your piece is well-written, you

deserve to be published: Your tuition and taxes fund the paper. Your fellow students deserve to hear your voice. Don't allow the editors to pretend the life issues have been resolved nationally or locally. In the face of censorship, appeal to the academic advisor of the club, the vice president of student affairs, or the college president. Document the battle and include editorial resistance in the published work.

I believe pro-choice strength is illusory and temporary. Universities by nature are dedicated to exposing truth and someday the vicious cycle of abortion lies will be broken. Pro-lifers, pro-compromisers, and pro-hybrids can all help reform the academy, which will play a pivotal role in educating the public. I believe in you. Rock on!



# Abortion, Evil, and J. K. Huysmans

Edward Short

In the aftermath of the trial of Kermit Gosnell, the doctor found guilty of murdering several children in his abortion clinic in Pennsylvania, commentary followed two tracks. The first argued that the trial exposed the savagery of abortion; the second that it exposed the need to make abortion more efficient by making it more accessible. When, subsequently, Planned Parenthood staff were filmed discussing selling body parts of aborted babies, commentary again followed the same two tracks, one decrying the tapes as proof that abortion is murder and the other calling for more efficient regulation to ensure more efficient abortion. Despite this commentary, the response of the general public to both scandals was oddly muted. Why there was not more widespread outrage is a nice question. Perhaps the inherent grisliness of the scandals was too much for many to confront, let alone denounce. What was it T. S. Eliot once said? “Human kind cannot bear very much reality.” Another possible explanation might be not so much that the general public is unable to register reality as that they are unable to register the reality of evil. To explore this possibility, I shall revisit the work of the nineteenth-century French novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans, who took up the issue of evil in several of his books, first in *À Rebours* (1882) and then in a lesser-known but brilliant tetralogy, comprising *Là-Bas* (1891), *En Route* (1895), *La Cathédrale* (1898), and *L’Oblat* (1903). However, before looking at how these books shed light on the evil of abortion, and on what the author considered to be the only effective antidote to that evil, I should say a few brief words about Huysmans himself.

Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907) was born and educated, worked and died in Paris. For most of his adult life, in addition to writing art criticism and fiction, he worked as a civil servant in La Sûreté Générale, the government department responsible for state security. His early work was written under the influence of Zola and the pseudo-scientific literary school of naturalism. Indeed, in *En Ménage* (1881), he wrote what amounts to a fictional tribute to the determinist pessimism of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the philosopher whose work animates the work of all of the naturalists. In one of his last books, Schopenhauer gave a useful summation of his thinking, which I shall quote at length, if only because the despair at the heart of his philosophy

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is an essential ingredient of the despair that Huysmans wrote so much of his later fiction to anatomize.

That human life must be some kind of mistake is sufficiently proved by the simple observation that man is a compound of needs that are hard to satisfy; that their satisfaction achieves nothing but a painless condition in which he is given over to boredom; and that boredom is nothing other than the sensation of the emptiness of existence. For if life, in the desire for which our essence and existence consists, possessed in itself a positive value and real content there would be no such thing as boredom: mere existence would fulfill and satisfy us. As things are, we take no pleasure in existence except when we are striving after something—in which case distance and difficulties make our goal look as if it would satisfy us (an illusion which fades when we reach it)—or when engaged in purely intellectual activity, in which case we are really stepping out of life so as to regard it from outside, like spectators at a play. Even sensual pleasure itself consists in a continual striving and ceases as soon as its goal is reached. Whenever we are not involved in one or other of these things but directed back to existence itself we are overtaken by its worthlessness and vanity and this is the sensation called boredom.

There is a certain dark comedy in this. Indeed, it reminds one of the bleak puzzles of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953). Dark comedy appealed to Huysmans, who had a good sense of humor of his own, at once sardonic and farcical. Yet Huysmans' deep discontent and yearning for God eventually turned him away from Schopenhauer and the naturalism that grew out of his despondent philosophy. It is in the books where Huysmans expresses his wrestling with this discontent that we can find his portrayal of the often unacknowledged evil that makes abortion possible.

## 1

In 1884, while on honeymoon in Dieppe with his wife, Constance, Oscar Wilde discovered the book that would become what the symbolist poet Arthur Symons called “the breviary of the decadence,” Huysmans' *À Rebours* (Against Nature). Wilde was deeply influenced by the book; indeed, it inspired him to write *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), though it is questionable whether he understood its satirical *raison d'être*. Huysmans' novel chronicles how its epicene hero, the Duc Jean des Esseintes, attacks all that is natural by secluding himself from the crass, grasping world of Third Republic Paris to construct his own dandified, alternative world, where the artificial and the deviant predominate. Thus, in one passage, the hero hosts “a farewell dinner,” as he calls it on his black-edged invitations, “to his dead virility,” in which all the food and drink are black, and “nude negresses, wearing slippers and stockings of silver cloth with patterns of tears, serve the guests.” In another passage, deciding which color to paint his study, des Esseintes is described as “ignoring the bourgeoisie, whose eyes are insensible to the pomp and

splendor of strong, vibrant tones; and devoting himself only to people with sensitive pupils, refined by literature and art, . . . convinced that the eyes of those among them who dream of the ideal and demand illusions are generally caressed by blue and its derivatives, mauve, lilac and pearl grey . . .” In yet another passage, the hero introduces a young man of sixteen to a Paris brothel to instill in him such a loathing of the opposite sex as to put him permanently off procreation.

From these passages, it is clear that Huysmans meant his depiction of his strenuously perverse hero to be a satirical criticism, not an endorsement of the unnatural and the decadent. “Dreaming of a refined solitude, a comfortable desert, a motionless ark in which to seek refuge from the unending deluge of human stupidity,” des Esseintes is shown spending his days in his Fontenay retreat deploring what he chooses to regard as the banality of Nature, while concocting various ways to defy and subvert it. In another passage, Huysmans has des Esseintes instruct his readers how they can enjoy the benefits of the seaside without leaving the capital: They can visit the Vigier baths on the Seine where “the illusion of the sea is undeniable” and gaze at photographs of whatever casino they wish to patronize. For des Esseintes, “The secret lies in knowing . . . how to concentrate deeply enough to produce the hallucination and succeed in substituting the dream reality for the reality itself.” And Huysmans nicely points the moral of this quintessentially decadent preoccupation by stating how “Artifice . . . seemed to des Esseintes the final distinctive mark of man’s genius.”

In this embrace of the nihilism of artificiality, it is not surprising that des Esseintes should be encouraged by his reading of Schopenhauer, most of whose philosophy, as we have seen, turned on the belief that man and indeed the world in which he lives were defined and driven by incessant, irrational, insatiable will. While the plot of *À Rebours* is threadbare, consisting of little more than des Esseintes’ ingenious attempts to sustain his make-believe dystopia, it is nevertheless true to the Schopenhauerian logic of its hero’s willful despair. And to underscore this, Huysmans is careful to have des Esseintes praise the German philosopher along lines that the convert in him would later roundly reject. For des Esseintes, Schopenhauer was admirable because “He did not affirm the revolting conception of original sin, nor did he feel inclined to argue that it is a beneficent God who protects the worthless and wicked, rains misfortunes on children, stultifies the aged and afflicts the innocent. He did not exalt the virtues of a Providence which has invented that useless, incomprehensible, unjust and senseless abomination, physical suffering.”

Huysmans himself, while dying a slow, painful death of jaw and mouth

cancer, “in the midst of frightening lucidity,” as one of his friends attested, would come to see in physical suffering a necessary, indeed a welcome penance. In fact, he refused all painkillers. “Anyone who hadn’t the faith and a ha’porth of courage,” he wrote to a friend in his last days, “would have blown his brains out long ago. Well I am not unhappy. The day I said *fiat*, God gave me incredible strength of will and wonderful peace of mind . . . I do not wish to be cured, but to continue to be purified so that Our Lady may take me above.” And elsewhere he wrote, “Mark well that suffering is the token of divine love. There is not a single saint whom he has not afflicted with it . . . . So you see he is treating us converts, us repentant rogues as true friends!” Since alleviating physical suffering—at least for the pregnant mother—has always been one of the more dubious justifications for killing unborn children in the womb, not to mention the so-called “mercy killing” of the aged and infirm, Huysmans’ treatment of this theme throughout his later novels is revelatory of his instinctive pro-life sympathies.

Certainly, he could replicate the arguments of abortionists with brilliant fidelity to their sophistical heartlessness. In one memorable scene in the book, he encounters a group of little boys.

The little chaps were fighting with one another. They struggled for bits of bread which they shoved into their cheeks, meanwhile sucking their fingers. Kicks and blows rained freely, and the weakest, trampled upon, cried out. At this sight, des Esseintes recovered his animation . . . . Contemplating the blind fury of these urchins, he thought of the cruel and abominable law of the struggle of existence; and, although these children were mean, he could not help being interested in their futures, yet could not but believe that it had been better for them had their mothers never given them birth. In fact, all they could expect of life was rash, colic, fever, and measles in their earliest years; slaps in the face and degrading drudgeries up to thirteen years; deceptions by women, sicknesses and infidelity during manhood and, toward the last, infirmities and agonies in a poorhouse or asylum.

Here, Huysmans gives eloquent expression to the same nihilistic logic that drives our own abortionists—not only Dr. Gosnell and the sellers of baby parts at Planned Parenthood, but everyone who maintains that there is some justification for killing children in the womb. Of course, Dr. Gosnell killed babies inside and outside of the womb. He and his staff routinely severed the spinal cords of moving, breathing babies born alive in his abortion clinic. But he was as serenely confident as des Esseintes that abortion was justifiable, if only because it spared unwanted children the miseries of life.

Indeed, the conclusion that des Esseintes draws from these suppositious evils could hardly be more categorical: “How vain, silly and mad it is to beget brats!” With his dim view of human proliferation, it is hardly surprising that des Esseintes should have no use for St. Vincent de Paul, who dedicated

so much of his life to looking after the abandoned “brats” of the poor. For des Esseintes, one could have nothing but contempt for “those ecclesiastics who had taken vows of sterility, yet were so inconsistent as to canonize Saint Vincent de Paul, because he saved innocent babes for useless torments!” In fine, the duke’s objections to St. Vincent de Paul’s solicitude for the unborn and the unwanted are no different from that of our own professed abortionists: “Children abandoned by their mothers were given homes instead of being left to die quietly without knowing what was happening, and yet the life that was kept for them would grow harder and bleaker day by day . . . Ah, in the name of pity, if ever futile procreation should be abolished, the time is now!”

With his sharp sense of the incidental comedy of decadence, Huysmans would have been amused to see the Society of St. Vincent de Paul join Catholic Charities USA and the Catholic Health Association in 2009 to support President Obama’s state health-care plan, which ensures not only mandatory contraceptive and abortion services, but euthanasia, eugenics, and sex education extolling deviance, promiscuity, and abortion. Had he lived to see the ignominies to which Catholic bureaucracies stoop to perpetuate their often nefarious interests, the Swiftian satirist in him would not have known whether to weep or guffaw.

Flaubert, a good friend of Huysmans, once observed that “Our ignorance of history makes us libel our own times. People have always been like this.” Huysmans certainly corroborates this when he has des Esseintes mount his argument for the justification of abortion, which is little different from that mounted by the international pro-abortion lobby for the last 40-odd years. “In short, society regarded as a crime the act of killing a creature endowed with life; and yet expelling a foetus simply meant destroying an animal that was less developed, less alive, certainly less intelligent and less prepossessing, than a dog or a cat, which could be strangled at birth with impunity.”

2

These animadversions notwithstanding, des Esseintes concedes, at his lowest ebb, that artificiality and perversion, and the contempt for life to which they give rise, do not make for either happiness or peace or the religious fulfillment for which so much of his being craved. As Huysmans’ narrator attests, des Esseintes “came at last to perceive that the reasoning of pessimism availed little in comforting him, that impossible faith in a future life alone would pacify him.” In the process, he rediscovers the Catholic faith of his childhood by rediscovering the music of the Church, “sad and mournful as a suppressed sob, poignant as a despairing invocation of humanity bewailing its mortal destiny and imploring the tender forgiveness of its Savior!”

At the end of *À Rebours*, after des Esseintes' doctors persuade him that the only cure for his physical and mental debility is to abjure his artificial seclusion and return to the world, the chastened duke resolves to repudiate his unnatural ways and reconcile himself to God and Nature. If the book begins with decadence and despair, it ends with a prayer: "O Lord, pity the Christian who doubts, the sceptic who would believe, the convict of life embarking alone in the night, under a sky no longer illumined by the consoling beacons of ancient faith."

Despite its clear satirical intent, *À Rebours* is embraced in many quarters as an unalloyed paean to decadence. In this respect, it is reminiscent of Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), which continues to be read as a celebration of homicidal hooliganism by readers who see nothing satirical in the author's portrait of Alex, the book's irredeemably depraved hero. Alex is simply a typical *droog*, acting out his naturally rebellious aggressions. Like Burgess's novel, Huysmans' *À Rebours* continues to sell briskly precisely because its readers embrace the very decadence that the novelist's satire was meant to expose, a decadence they see not as evil, but as something liberating, joyous, indeed exemplary. One can see a good example of this in a piece on Huysmans that appeared recently in *The New Yorker* by Adam Leith Gollner, in which the author discusses the book with the aptly named pop musician Richard Hell.

When reached to discuss *À Rebours* recently, Hell referred to it still as "the primary source." Which isn't to suggest that Huysmans anticipated punk: despite the book's punkish fascination with boredom and the search for kicks, and its utter lack of political conviction, *À Rebours* peddled an elitist, aristocratic hyper-aestheticism that has nothing in common with punk's anyone-can-do-this ethos. Even so, Hell seemed to be channeling Huysmans when his self-designed "Please Kill Me" T-shirt spawned the D.I.Y. movement. What Hell took from *À Rebours*, above all, was the idea of a person trying to build a new reality—"making your own world," as he put it. "For me, going into rock and roll was an opportunity to deliberately design my whole world and way of life in a way that's not too distant from what des Esseintes did."

What is startling about these otherwise banal musings is how much they resemble the argument that Justice Anthony Kennedy mounted to reaffirm the constitutional right to abortion in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992): "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." If there is one satirical target that Huysmans hits again and again throughout his work—perhaps because it was one that was so close to home—it is the pride of the unshriven intellect, the arrogant assumption that the mind of man can make or unmake the laws of nature, and no one epitomizes that better in our own day than Justice Kennedy.

After the indiscriminating critical success of *À Rebours*, Huysmans was clearly concerned that the satirical objects that he had written the novel to accomplish had been almost entirely misunderstood. Neither Zola nor Mallarmé nor Wilde appreciated what he had set himself to achieve in the novel. Only the Catholic novelist Barbey d'Aurevilly grasped the import of Huysmans' epidemiology of decadence: "After such a novel, it only remains for the author to choose between the mouth of a pistol or the feet of the Cross." That Huysmans chose the Cross over the pistol has enormous implications for our own cultural and spiritual predicament, where we, too, must choose between the culture of death and the culture of resurrected life and love.

## 3

In an attempt to make his readers understand why he had turned against naturalism and why he saw decadence as the ineluctable issue of naturalism, Huysmans set about writing a series of books with a hero named Durtal that would capture at once the true character of evil and the radical need for conversion to understand and combat it. Thus, Huysmans chose to make the first book of the series, *Là-Bas* ("The Damned") focus on Durtal writing a book about Gilles de Rais (otherwise known as "Bluebeard"), the serial child murderer, who sodomized his victims before dismembering them. Gilles de Montmorency-Laval, Baron de Rais (1405-1440), was a knight and lord from Anjou, Brittany, and Poitou, a leading figure in the French army, and a gallant companion-in-arms of Joan of Arc. Yet, as one of his retainers testified at Gilles' murder trial, this highly respected Marshal of France had also killed 800 children. In *Gilles*, Huysmans was presenting his readers with another character who was "against nature," who was intent on creating his own reality, but one whom no one could possibly mistake for an oddly lovable decadent.

And yet to show how disturbingly human this otherwise monstrous "real life" character was, Huysmans assures his readers that Gilles was not without a conscience. At his trial, after trying to shout down his prosecutors, he broke down and admitted his guilt. Indeed, he supplied the court with a voluminous written confession, detailing his egregious sins, many appalling passages of which Huysmans shares with his readers. And this highlights another aspect of the reality of evil that Huysmans is careful to impart: its humanity. Even in the case of a serial child rapist and murderer like Gilles, evil is not some aberration only committed by sociopaths incapable of remorse. On the contrary, evil is an inalienably human proclivity, whether it takes the form of murdering the born or murdering the unborn, or engaging in the dreary fornication that Huysmans has Durtal engage in with the drearily satanic

Madame Chantelouve. That Huysmans goes out of his way to stress this aspect of his otherwise unspeakable subject demonstrates the earnestness of his moral vision, which is the last thing that we should expect to find in the work of the usual “decadent” writer. Speaking of the contrite Gilles, Huysmans writes:

As he can descend no further, he tries returning on the way by which he has come, but now remorse overtakes him, overwhelms him, and wrenches him without respite. His nights are nights of expiation. Besieged by phantoms, he howls like a wounded beast. He is found rushing along the solitary corridors of the château. He weeps, throws himself on his knees, swears to God that he will do penance. He promises to found pious institutions. He does establish, at Mâchecoul, a boys’ academy in honour of the Holy Innocents. He speaks of shutting himself up in a cloister, of going to Jerusalem, begging his bread on the way.

Here is the remorseful face of evil, than which there is nothing more human, and it is not one that we can afford to imagine of no moral relevance to ourselves.

## 4

At the opening of *Là-Bas*, Durtal’s faithful friend Des Hermies introduces the autobiographical hero. “In all your books you have fallen on our *fin de siècle*—our *queue du siècle*—tooth and nail. But, Lord! a man soon gets tired of whacking something that doesn’t fight back but merely goes its own way repeating its offences. You needed to escape into another epoch and get your bearings while waiting for a congenial subject to present itself. That explains your spiritual disarray of the last few months and your immediate recovery as soon as you stumbled onto Gilles de Rais.” No one should take this at face value and assume that the choice of subject had been motivated by a kind of time traveler’s escapism. Huysmans underscores his satirical intent when he has Durtal respond to his friend’s analysis: “Des Hermies had diagnosed him accurately. The day on which Durtal had plunged into the frightful and delightful latter mediæval age had been the dawn of a new existence. The flouting of his actual surroundings brought peace to Durtal’s soul, and he had completely reorganized his life, mentally cloistering himself, far from the furore of contemporary letters, in the château de Tiffauges with the monster Bluebeard, with whom he lived in perfect accord, even in mischievous amity.” In Durtal, in other words, we have a character who may share something of the ignorance of Huysmans’ readers when it comes to the true nature of evil, but the point of the book is to have him disabused of that ignorance. And, certainly, the horrors committed by Gilles accomplish that end amply enough, as do the blandishments of Durtal’s mistress, Madame Chantelouve, who shows that the evil of the mediæval murderer is not

something confined to the “latter mediaeval age.”

The lurid passages in Huysmans’ novel recounting Gilles’ murders of children—culled as they are from actual court documents—make for deeply disturbing reading. Yet, however disturbing, reading them will always provide a useful corrective to the moral inanity of those like Justice Anthony Kennedy who imagine that we can redefine evil out of existence, or maintain that flouting the natural law has something to do with liberty.

The Durtal novels capture the horror of evil with an unforgettable vividness; they also show how bedeviled men, whether Gilles or Gosnell or you or I, can combat evil. In his superb biography of Huysmans, Robert Baldick quotes the author himself regarding the second of the Durtal novels, *En Route*: “The plot of the novel is as simple as it could be. I’ve taken the principal character of *Là-Bas*, Durtal, had him converted and sent him to a Trappist monastery. In studying his conversion, I’ve tried to trace the progress of a soul surprised by the gift of grace, and developing in an ecclesiastical atmosphere, to the accompaniment of mystical literature, liturgy, and plainchant, against a background of all that admirable art which the Church has created.”

*En Route* is also notable for being one of the books Oscar Wilde requested when imprisoned in Reading Gaol. Despite all of the false nonsense that has been written about that tragic figure, the profoundly remorseful Wilde would have understood what Durtal meant when he confides how “After having dragged the sickness of my soul around all the clinics of the intellect, I ended up, with God’s grace, going to the only hospital where they put you to bed and really look after you—the Church.” Moreover, in *En Route*, Wilde would have seen *À Rebours* in a new, more accurate light. Confessing sin is essential to understanding and abjuring sin.

Huysmans’ understanding of the Church was indissolubly bound up with his understanding of Our Lady. In *L’Oblat*, he has Durtal, the reluctant convert, the sensual man who never finds temptations of the flesh easy to resist, the man profoundly conscious of his own legion of flaws, finally submit wholeheartedly to the will of God. “There is much to atone for,” he says. “If the divine rod is ready to chastise us, let us bare our backs for it; let us at least show a little willingness.” And in this, as Baldick shows, Our Lady offers sinners vital help.

Huysmans maintained that Mary was the one human being over whom Suffering had no rights, but that in imitation of her Son she renounced this immunity, “wishing to suffer as much as it was in her power to suffer.” Thus he united woman and suffering in a common rehabilitation . . . for in the person of the *Regina martyrum* he represented woman no longer as Satan’s catspaw, but—by virtue of her suffering—as an instrument of salvation, the glorious mediatrix and redeemer of mankind.

That all of the Durtal novels culminate in Durtal's conversion to Catholicism has not won his creator many accolades. Although Huysmans befriended many priests in his lifetime, and no one could deny the devoutness of his faith, the Church has never known what to make of him: He was always so outspoken, so critical of factitious piety, which, now as then, characterizes so much of the clerical Church. Then again, if the Church looked on the Durtal novels with disapproving eyes, the literary world has been scarcely less critical. Huysmans' conversion is often dismissed as the opportunistic ploy of an author who wished to cash in on the reaction that followed the Dreyfus Affair. In many quarters, Huysmans will never be forgiven for the unexpected success he had with *La Cathédrale*, which sold 20,000 copies in its first month alone. In the *New Oxford Companion to French Literature* (1995), Jennifer Birkett of the University of Birmingham brings a now commonplace charge with comical crudity: "Huysmans' transition from Naturalism to Symbolism and Catholicism . . . represents the political refusal of the desk-bound civil servant that Huysmans remained all his life to engage with the challenges of industrialization and democratization. It is an evasion into idealism that is linked with right-wing and regressive political factions."

This, of course, is the same charge leveled against the pro-life lobby. One can read scores of accounts of the history of abortion written in the last forty years and never see one historian show the least interest in the slaughter of the innocents. Opposition to abortion, like Huysmans' opposition to the nihilism of decadence, is only explicable in terms of right-wing reaction. Yet no one will credit Birkett's unjustifiable swipe who reads Huysmans' account of the prayer book he found at Chartres composed in the fourteenth century by Gaston Fébus, Comte de Foix, one of whose prayers exhibits the uncompromising contrition that is at the heart of Huysmans' best work:

Thou who hast shaped me in my mother's womb, let me not perish . . . . Lord, I confess my poverty . . . . My conscience gnaws me and shows me the secrets of my heart. Avarice constrains me, concupiscence befouls me, gluttony disgraces me, anger torments me, inconstancy crushes me, indolence oppresses me, hypocrisy beguiles me . . . and these, Lord, are the companions with whom I have spent my youth, these are the friends I have known, these are the masters I have served." And further on he exclaims, "Sin have I heaped upon sin, and the sins which I could not commit in very deed yet have I committed by evil desire."

## 5

The reason why the public response to the Gosnell and Planned Parenthood outrages has been so muted is that in order for us to denounce Gosnell and Planned Parenthood properly, we should have to denounce ourselves, our

own connivance in evil, our own radical selfishness, our own apathy. Huysmans is careful to stress how Gilles confesses and asks God pardon for his sins: We must do the same. And we can begin by understanding the true character of abortion. What was it that Mother Teresa said at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington in 1994? “What is taking place in America is a war against the child. And if we accept that the mother can kill her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?” Then, again, at the same breakfast, this soon-to-be-saint put the matter with something of the Comte’s laconic eloquence: “It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish.”

Since all of Huysmans’ work is a prayer, and we need prayers more than anything else to understand and respond to the evil of abortion, I shall end this essay with another apposite prayer by the Comte de Foix:

My God and my Mercy, I am ashamed to pray to Thee for very shame of my evil conscience; give a fountain of tears to my eyes, and to my hands largess of alms and charity; give me a seemly faith, and hope, and abiding charity. Lord, Thou holdest no man in horror save the fool that denies Thee. Oh, my God, the Giver of My Redemption and Receiver of my soul, I have sinned and Thou hast suffered me!



*Giotto, “Slaughter of the Innocents”*

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### **SISTERS IN LAW: HOW SANDRA DAY O’CONNOR AND RUTH BADER GINSBURG WENT TO THE SUPREME COURT AND CHANGED THE WORLD**

Linda Hirshman

(HarperCollins, 421 pp., 2015, \$28.99)

*Reviewed by John Grondelski*

*Sisters in Law* is an examination from a “feminist” perspective of the first two women on the United States Supreme Court: Sandra Day O’Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Like that of most feminists, author Linda Hirshman’s admiration for Ginsburg is unabashed. Her opinion of O’Connor is more tempered, ultimately somewhat condescending, but in any event approving, because, O’Connor’s suggestions of apostasy to *laissez-faire* abortion in *Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health* notwithstanding, she came around to the true “faith” (Hirshman’s word) by giving *Roe v. Wade* a new lease on life in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

Hirshman, a lawyer who also teaches “cultural history” at Brandeis, offers general biographical details of both O’Connor and Ginsburg. Her clear interest, however, is how the first two women on the Supreme Court of the United States advanced “women’s issues.” And while “women’s issues” might encompass a broad range of things—banning single-sex public universities or sex-differentiated rules for alimony, income tax, or other social programs are all discussed in the book—it is clear from the work as a whole that the litmus test of “women’s rights” is absolute fealty to unrestricted abortion.

O’Connor thus posed a bit of a problem for Hirshman: The first woman on the Supreme Court was appointed by the *bête noire* of “women’s rights,” Ronald Reagan. And, unlike Ginsburg, who was into issues advocacy as an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer for decades, O’Connor at first glance did not seem to be the right woman to make that breakthrough to the Court (as if any woman on the right could have been, anyway).

Hirshman nevertheless found some seeds of future greatness in O’Connor’s earlier career. She argues that O’Connor had supported an unsuccessful effort to liberalize Arizona’s abortion law before *Roe* and had resisted efforts, as a Republican State Senate leader, to attack *Roe* directly afterwards (although Hirshman states that O’Connor did support barring state funding for abortion).

The author notes further similarities and dissimilarities between O’Connor

and Ginsburg in the period dating back to the battle over ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Advocates of the ERA sometimes argued that it was necessary because the Fourteenth Amendment had been designed to counter racial, not sexual, discrimination. Although the ERA was adopted easily by Congress, during the process of ratification by the states its truly radical potential was exposed. Once that happened, the ERA's approval was doomed, even after Congress adopted a probably unconstitutional extension of time for its ratification in 1978.

Hirshman reports that, as an Arizona legislator, O'Connor initially pushed for the ERA. However, once it had become the object of conservative opposition, burying its chances for ratification in the Grand Canyon State, she quietly abandoned it. "From that point on, O'Connor got the reputation of being someone who didn't pick losing battles . . . ."

Ginsburg, then a law professor and ACLU activist, pushed hard for the ERA and sought to do damage control when University of Chicago Constitutional scholar Philip Kurland's law review article provoked debate about how it would undermine laws that protect women. (According to the Hirshman-Ginsburg orthodoxy, there are no laws that protect women *qua* women: Protective legislation, in their mindset, is simply discrimination masked as benevolence.) The ERA was gone, but there were other ways to advance one's agenda. "But Ginsburg was a soldier . . . . [Federal] cases . . . were her idea of a good plan to move women's equality along." If you can't get the people or their representatives to get on board, there are always unelected judges.

And nowhere is that reliance clearer than on abortion.

In Yiddish, the term "*mensch*" is a compliment, meaning a "stand-up guy," someone on whom one can rely in the end. I wish I knew if there was a feminist counterpart to *mensch*, because in the end Sandra O'Connor comes out as one for Hirshman. Maybe O'Connor fudged on her earlier abortion commitments. Perhaps, in *Akron*, she had the intellectual honesty to admit that "the *Roe* framework, then, is clearly on a collision course with itself" (462 U.S. 416, at 458). But, unlike her fellow dissenters, Justices White and Rehnquist, O'Connor would not in the end admit that the flaw was in the *Roe* decision itself rather than in *Roe*'s "framework." Instead, she proceeded with her own interior redesign.

O'Connor, of course, earned redemption from Hirshman's perspective with her troika opinion in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. According to Hirshman, Planned Parenthood maneuvered to fast-track *Casey* onto the docket of the Court's October 1991 term to ensure that a decision would come down in the heat of the 1992 Presidential election, betting either that the justices would

find a change of course a bridge too far or else provoke an electoral backlash from “women.” While *Roe* seemed initially doomed, Hirshman argues that Justice Souter, uneasy about reversing a precedent, thought that O’Connor would be squishy on the issue and Anthony Kennedy more inclined to ally with him than with Justice Scalia. In the end, that threesome rescued *Roe*: Kennedy, by turning Marlo Thomas’s album title, “Free to Be . . . You and Me” into a Constitutional dictum (a meme that would repeatedly rear its head in his judicial legislating: See *Obergefell v. Hodges*); Souter, with his stick-to-precedent-no-matter-how-wrong trope; and O’Connor, with her new test of “unduly burdensome” for whether a state can impose a particular restriction on prenatal killing. What constitutes an “undue burden” is, of course, whatever five unelected and unaccountable judges think at any given instance.

O’Connor’s performance in *Stenberg v. Carhart*, which struck down a Nebraska ban on partial-birth abortion, shows just how her “undue burden” standard leads to the rule of judges rather than the rule of law. Hirshman’s take is that, on the results, O’Connor was right (she was part of the 5-4 majority nullifying the law), but on the reasoning, she was wrong. “O’Connor’s opinion is of a piece with her abortion jurisprudence since 1983. She would never provide the crucial fifth vote to send women back to 1972 [before *Roe*]. But she would never let them move beyond the backlash that erupted after 1973 either. With the tantalizing possibility that some intrusion might hit the sweet spot of O’Connor’s burden test, the abortion battles would continue . . . . “When Congress later enacted a federal partial-birth abortion ban, a 5-4 majority—without Sandra O’Connor—upheld it in *Gonzales v. Carhart*. Hirshman quotes Ginsburg in dissent, claiming that the only reason *Gonzales* differed from *Stenberg* was a change in the Court’s membership (Alito replacing O’Connor). From a different perspective, an argument can be made that in Justice Alito one has a principled jurist ready to recognize that *Roe* is fatally flawed and beyond being remedied by further jurisprudential tinkering. If the Court is to be a court, and not a policy-making body, then Constitutional validity cannot depend on how a justice—of either sex—rolled out of bed this morning.

That is not to say that Hirshman has no issues with Justice Ginsburg. For example, she is critical of Ginsburg’s occasionally wavering theoretically about the opportuneness of *Roe*. Ginsburg has sometimes suggested that *Roe* went too far and too fast, and that the decision might have been better received politically had the compass of *Roe* been at first more limited. That’s not to say that Ginsburg would retreat on what *Roe* accomplished; she just sometimes seems more inclined to treat the expansion of abortion rights like cooking a

frog: gradually keep raising the temperature, until the frog is dead.

Some have suggested that women would gradually have brought enough men around to accepting the breadth of *Roe*'s liberty. Hirshman, however, thinks that any gradualism was unwarranted:

In retrospect, the best thinking is that Ginsburg was wrong about the backlash. Women, unlike racial minorities, were deeply divided on the subject of their rights. Their distribution in the households of their oppressors gave them the chance not only to educate but equally to sell out the movement. Religion would play a powerful role in women's thinking. The backlash against abortion rights was well under way when the Court decided *Roe v. Wade*. And nothing the Court could have done would have staved off the resistance to abortion rights in particular or women's rights in general.

The audacity of that claim merits rereading. Pro-life women are Stockholm syndrome victims, supporting their "oppressors" and betraying "feminism." Throw in a dose of anti-religious (preferably anti-Catholic) vitriol. So, presumably, the only way to save women from themselves was to have seven men resort to "raw judicial power" to get their heads right. Yes, "we" know what's right for women. That's why Ruth Bader Ginsburg rocks and Sandra Day O'Connor, despite her sometimes June Cleaver demeanor, can be forgiven. In the same vein, Geraldine Ferraro is of perpetual memory; Lindy Boggs is best consigned to the forgotten. Perhaps, in addition to the XX chromosome, one needs a special "choice" gene to qualify for the right to speak about "women's" rights.

The title of this book is a *double entendre*: Though they may not have been of the same political family, O'Connor and Ginsburg" were "sisters" "in law." However, this is misleading: O'Connor and Ginsburg may have practiced the legal profession, but what they did and do as federal judges hardly represented "law"—unless one subscribes to Charles Evans Hughes's dictum that "the Constitution is what the judges say it is." For Ginsburg, the law is her ideological theories about women, to be read into the Constitution through the steady drip-drip-drip of ideologically-driven litigation. As bad as that might be, it is still more honest than Sandra O'Connor's "jurisprudence" (now largely practiced by Anthony Kennedy) that makes Constitutional rights or wrongs rise or fall on the basis of a justice's personal revelations.

I would draw two lessons for 2016. One: the clear imperative of electing a president who appoints judges committed to judging, not legislating. Two—and perhaps more important—an end to the participation of pro-life legislators in the Kabuki theater that pretends judicial nominations occur in some sort of sterile political vacuum and that a competent nominee has neither thought about *Roe* nor has anything to say about it. I suggest this with hesitation,

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because I deplore the politicization of the nomination process. But the current code of silence has given us supposedly “strict constructionists” (appointed by pro-life presidents) like David Souter, Anthony Kennedy, and Sandra O’Connor. Few people have any real doubts about how Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, or Ruth Bader Ginsburg will come down on most issues. Why are only opponents of *Roe*’s judicial activism expected to buy a cat in a bag?

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*“At the tone, the bell will toll for thee.”*

## APPENDIX A

*[Ryan Bomberger is the Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer of The Radiance Foundation, a nonprofit life-affirming organization. The following article was published on Jan. 18, 2016, on Townhall.com and is reprinted with Mr. Bomberger's permission.]*

### **Dr. Martin Luther King and the Social Injustice of Abortion**

*Ryan Bomberger*

Today, we honor a man whose words agitated, illuminated, inspired and liberated millions. Martin Luther King Jr. was a civil rights warrior with weapons, not of blade or bullet, but of ideas. In 2016, those ideas are spoken by many, yet followed by few. We're a nation still obsessed with the hue of our skin (hello #BlackLivesMatter movement), while ignoring the more valuable substance that lies within. To our own detriment, we often judge a book by its glossy cover.

Martin Luther King Jr. was no different. He became enamored with the facade of Planned Parenthood and its glossy cover of family planning and the false assurance of eliminating poverty. Birth control propagandists, like Margaret Sanger, promised equality. It failed. Instead, the divide that King fought so passionately to mend became a chasm filled with communities ravaged by epidemic levels of abortion, rampant fatherlessness, births to unmarried women, exponentially high STD/HIV rates, and higher poverty rates.

I am grateful, beyond words, for King's tireless efforts to elevate humanity. His ultimate sacrifice, his very life, reminds me that there are things worth dying for. I know our collective memories of America's civil rights champions are sacrosanct. But extraordinary people like Martin Luther King Jr. are not omniscient. They were, and are, quite fallible. Little did Martin Luther King Jr. know that his words (or arguably Coretta Scott King's) in 1966 immortalized in ink and praising Planned Parenthood, would literally turn blood red.

Planned Parenthood, the nation's number one killer of African-Americans (more die by abortion than all other causes of death combined), boasts of King's support at the 1966 inauguration of the Margaret Sanger Award. Abortion wasn't legal then and married heterosexual couples adorned the covers of Planned Parenthood's printed propaganda. In an advice column he wrote for *Ebony* magazine, from 1957-1958, King recognized the wrong of abortion in a response to a young man who compelled his girlfriend to the crime. He advised, in part: "One can never rectify a mistake until he admits that a mistake has been made."

Taking cues from his own advice, supporting Planned Parenthood was King's mistake. There are disturbing questions that have to be asked, such as "How much did MLK know about this eugenics-birther organization?" Surely he knew that its founder, Margaret Sanger, prided herself in speaking before the KKK on behalf of her organization's mission. He had to have known she proclaimed in her 1920 book, "Women and the New Race" (and throughout her whole life): "Birth control itself, often denounced as a violation of natural law, is nothing more or less than the facilitation of the process of weeding out the unfit, of preventing the birth of

defectives or of those who will become defective.”

Did he know about the failed Negro Project where poorer blacks were targeted with birth control policies to “reduce or eliminate” their birth rates? He had to be aware that the president of Planned Parenthood, during the time he was given the award, was Alan Guttmacher, former Vice President of the irrefutably racist American Eugenics Society. Certainly he knew eugenicists were forcibly sterilizing women, disproportionately black, across the country, work involving many Planned Parenthood affiliates and physicians. Did he not know that all of the peaceful protests, sit-ins, and boycotts in the South were aimed at eugenics-based Jim Crow laws . . . the same warped pseudoscientific racism that birthed Planned Parenthood?

Or was he, like many others, too fixed on that glossy cover to turn the page and find out what was inside?

Sadly, his lack of awareness of Planned Parenthood spurred on an even more insidious injustice than that which he challenged with such spiritual fervor. We honor a great man while acknowledging he wasn’t always right. Abortion is now epidemic in the black community. In New York City, the abortion of black babies occurs at an alarming ratio that is 5 times higher than whites, and twice as high as Hispanics. For every 1,000 black babies born alive, there are 1,180 babies destroyed by abortion (as compared to 240 white babies per 1,000 born alive and 610 Hispanic babies aborted per 1,000 born alive). Nearly sixty percent of all viable black pregnancies in NYC, the home of Planned Parenthood, end in abortion. It is epidemic.

This isn’t the “dream” MLK spoke of, but a nightmare reality that feeds the abortion industry’s bottom line. Planned Parenthood commits heinous injustice every single day. When the nation’s largest abortion chain invokes King’s name, to justify the slaughter of over one million innocent lives each year, it mocks the sacrifice of one who fought, and died, for human dignity.

The arc of the moral universe may be long, and it may bend toward justice. But evil has a way of forcing detours that take humanity on a much longer course. In his 1967 speech “The Three Evils of Society,” Dr. King passionately declared: “Stand for righteousness! Stand for justice! Stand for truth!”

Planned Parenthood still enjoys abusing the legacy of Dr. King to advance its abortion empire, killing babies of every hue in the name of the god of abortion. They will twist any historical figure, any word, and any moment to protect the one thing they adore more than anything else—the blood money that has made them a billion-dollar Goliath.

But have no fear all you Davids out there. We know how that story ends.

## APPENDIX B

[*Frederica Mathewes-Green is the author of Real Choices: Listening to Women; Looking for Alternatives to Abortion. This article was published on National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com) on Jan. 22, 2016, and is reprinted with NR's permission.*]

### When Abortion Suddenly Stopped Making Sense

*Frederica Mathewes-Green*

At the time of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, I was a college student—an anti-war, mother-earth, feminist, hippie college student. That particular January I was taking a semester off, living in the D.C. area and volunteering at the feminist “underground newspaper” *Off Our Backs*. As you’d guess, I was strongly in favor of legalizing abortion. The bumper sticker on my car read, “Don’t labor under a misconception; legalize abortion.”

The first issue of *Off Our Backs* after the *Roe* decision included one of my movie reviews, and also an essay by another member of the collective criticizing the decision. It didn’t go far enough, she said, because it allowed states to restrict abortion in the third trimester. The Supreme Court should not meddle in what should be decided between the woman and her doctor. She should be able to choose abortion through all nine months of pregnancy.

But, at the time, we didn’t have much understanding of what abortion was. We knew nothing of fetal development. We consistently termed the fetus “a blob of tissue,” and that’s just how we pictured it—an undifferentiated mucous-like blob, not recognizable as human or even as alive. It would be another 15 years or so before pregnant couples could show off sonograms of their unborn babies, shocking us with the obvious humanity of the unborn.

We also thought, back then, that few abortions would ever be done. It’s a grim experience, going through an abortion, and we assumed a woman would choose one only as a last resort. We were fighting for that “last resort.” We had no idea how common the procedure would become; today, one in every five pregnancies ends in abortion.

Nor could we have imagined how high abortion numbers would climb. In the 43 years since *Roe v. Wade*, there have been 59 million abortions. It’s hard even to grasp a number that big. Twenty years ago, someone told me that, if the names of all those lost babies were inscribed on a wall, like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the wall would have to stretch for 50 miles. It’s 20 years later now, and that wall would have to stretch twice as far. But no names could be written on it; those babies had no names.

We expected that abortion would be rare. What we didn’t realize was that, once abortion becomes available, it becomes the most attractive option for everyone around the pregnant woman. If she has an abortion, it’s like the pregnancy never existed. No one is inconvenienced. It doesn’t cause trouble for the father of the baby, or her boss, or the person in charge of her college scholarship. It won’t embarrass her mom and dad.

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Abortion is like a funnel; it promises to solve all the problems at once. So there is significant pressure on a woman to choose abortion, rather than adoption or parenting.

A woman who had had an abortion told me, “Everyone around me was saying they would ‘be there for me’ if I had the abortion, but no one said they’d ‘be there for me’ if I had the baby.” For everyone around the pregnant woman, abortion looks like the sensible choice. A woman who determines instead to continue an unplanned pregnancy looks like she’s being foolishly stubborn. It’s like she’s taken up some unreasonable hobby. People think: If she would only go off and do this one thing, everything would be fine.

But that’s an illusion. Abortion can’t really turn back the clock. It can’t push the rewind button on life and make it so that she was never pregnant. It can make it easy for everyone around the woman to forget the pregnancy, but the woman herself may struggle. When she first sees the positive pregnancy test she may feel, in a panicky way, that she has to get rid of it as fast as possible. But life stretches on after abortion, for months and years—for many long nights—and all her life long she may ponder the irreversible choice she made.

This issue gets presented as if it’s a tug of war between the woman and the baby. We see them as mortal enemies, locked in a fight to the death. But that’s a strange idea, isn’t it? It must be the first time in history when mothers and their own children have been assumed to be at war. We’re supposed to picture the child attacking her, trying to destroy her hopes and plans, and picture the woman grateful for the abortion, since it rescued her from the clutches of her child.

If you were in charge of a nature preserve and you noticed that the pregnant female mammals were trying to miscarry their pregnancies, eating poisonous plants or injuring themselves, what would you do? Would you think of it as a battle between the pregnant female and her unborn and find ways to help those pregnant animals miscarry? No, of course not. You would immediately think, “Something must be really wrong in this environment.” Something is creating intolerable stress, so much so that animals would rather destroy their own offspring than bring them into the world. You would strive to identify and correct whatever factors were causing this stress in the animals.

The same thing goes for the human animal. Abortion gets presented to us as if it’s something women want; both pro-choice and pro-life rhetoric can reinforce that idea. But women do this only if all their other options look worse. It’s supposed to be “her choice,” yet so many women say, “I really didn’t have a choice.”

I changed my opinion on abortion after I read an article in *Esquire* magazine, way back in 1976. I was home from grad school, flipping through my dad’s copy, and came across an article titled “What I Saw at the Abortion.” The author, Richard Selzer, was a surgeon, and he was in favor of abortion, but he’d never seen one. So he asked a colleague whether, next time, he could go along.

Selzer described seeing the patient, 19 weeks pregnant, lying on her back on the table. (That is unusually late; most abortions are done by the tenth or twelfth week.)

The doctor performing the procedure inserted a syringe into the woman's abdomen and injected her womb with a prostaglandin solution, which would bring on contractions and cause a miscarriage. (This method isn't used anymore, because too often the baby survived the procedure—chemically burned and disfigured, but clinging to life. Newer methods, including those called “partial birth abortion” and “dismemberment abortion,” more reliably ensure death.)

After injecting the hormone into the patient's womb, the doctor left the syringe standing upright on her belly. Then, Selzer wrote, “I see something other than what I expected here. . . . It is the hub of the needle that is in the woman's belly that has jerked. First to one side. Then to the other side. Once more it wobbles, is tugged, like a fishing line nibbled by a sunfish.”

He realized he was seeing the fetus's desperate fight for life. And as he watched, he saw the movement of the syringe slow down and then stop. The child was dead. Whatever else an unborn child does not have, he has one thing: a will to live. He will fight to defend his life.

The last words in Selzer's essay are, “Whatever else is said in abortion's defense, the vision of that other defense [i.e., of the child defending its life] will not vanish from my eyes. And it has happened that you cannot reason with me now. For what can language do against the truth of what I saw?”

**T**he truth of what he saw disturbed me deeply. There I was, anti-war, anti-capital punishment, even vegetarian, and a firm believer that social justice cannot be won at the cost of violence. Well, this sure looked like violence. How had I agreed to make this hideous act the centerpiece of my feminism? How could I think it was wrong to execute homicidal criminals, wrong to shoot enemies in wartime, but all right to kill our own sons and daughters?

For that was another disturbing thought: Abortion means killing not strangers but our own children, our own flesh and blood. No matter who the father, every child aborted is that woman's own son or daughter, just as much as any child she will ever bear.

We had somehow bought the idea that abortion was necessary if women were going to rise in their professions and compete in the marketplace with men. But how had we come to agree that we will sacrifice our children, as the price of getting ahead? When does a man ever have to choose between his career and the life of his child?

Once I recognized the inherent violence of abortion, none of the feminist arguments made sense. Like the claim that a fetus is not really a person because it is so small. Well, I'm only 5 foot 1. Women, in general, are smaller than men. Do we really want to advance a principle that big people have more value than small people? That if you catch them before they've reached a certain size, it's all right to kill them?

What about the child who is “unwanted”? It was a basic premise of early feminism that women should not base their sense of worth on whether or not a man

“wants” them. We are valuable simply because we are members of the human race, regardless of any other person’s approval. Do we really want to say that “unwanted” people might as well be dead? What about a woman who is “wanted” when she’s young and sexy but less so as she gets older? At what point is it all right to terminate her?

The usual justification for abortion is that the unborn is not a “person.” It’s said that “Nobody knows when life begins.” But that’s not true; everybody knows when life—a new individual human life—gets started. It’s when the sperm dissolves in the egg. That new single cell has a brand-new DNA, never before seen in the world. If you examined through a microscope three cells lined up—the newly fertilized ovum, a cell from the father, and a cell from the mother—you would say that, judging from the DNA, the cells came from three different people.

When people say the unborn is “not a person” or “not a life” they mean that it has not yet grown or gained abilities that arrive later in life. But there’s no agreement about which abilities should be determinative. Pro-choice people don’t even agree with each other. Obviously, law cannot be based on such subjective criteria. If it’s a case where the question is “Can I kill this?” the answer must be based on objective medical and scientific data. And the fact is, an unborn child, from the very first moment, is a new human individual. It has the three essential characteristics that make it “a human life”: It’s alive and growing, it is composed entirely of human cells, and it has unique DNA. It’s a person, just like the rest of us.

Abortion indisputably ends a human life. But this loss is usually set against the woman’s need to have an abortion in order to freely direct her own life. It is a particular cruelty to present abortion as something women want, something they demand, they find liberating. Because nobody wants this. The procedure itself is painful, humiliating, expensive—no woman “wants” to go through it. But once it’s available, it appears to be the logical, reasonable choice. All the complexities can be shoved down that funnel. Yes, abortion solves all the problems; but it solves them inside the woman’s body. And she is expected to keep that pain inside for a lifetime, and be grateful for the gift of abortion.

Many years ago I wrote something in an essay about abortion, and I was surprised that the line got picked up and frequently quoted. I’ve seen it in both pro-life and pro-choice contexts, so it appears to be something both sides agree on.

I wrote, “No one wants an abortion as she wants an ice cream cone or a Porsche. She wants an abortion as an animal, caught in a trap, wants to gnaw off its own leg.”

Strange, isn’t it, that both pro-choice and pro-life people agree that is true? Abortion is a horrible and harrowing experience. That women choose it so frequently shows how much worse continuing a pregnancy can be. Essentially, we’ve agreed to surgically alter women so that they can get along in a man’s world. And then expect them to be grateful for it.

Nobody wants to have an abortion. And if nobody wants to have an abortion, why are women doing it, 2,800 times a day? If women are doing something 2,800

times daily that they don't want to do, this is not liberation we've won. We are colluding in a strange new form of oppression.

\* \* \*

And so we come around to one more March for Life, like the one last year, like the one next year. Protesters understandably focus on the unborn child, because the danger it faces is the most galvanizing aspect of this struggle. If there are different degrees of injustice, surely violence is the worst manifestation, and killing worst of all. If there are different categories of innocent victim, surely the small and helpless have a higher claim to protection, and tiny babies the highest of all. The minimum purpose of government is to shield the weak from abuse by the strong, and there is no one weaker or more voiceless than unborn children. And so we keep saying that they should be protected, for all the same reasons that newborn babies are protected. Pro-lifers have been doing this for 43 years now, and will continue holding a candle in the darkness for as many more years as it takes.

I understand all the reasons why the movement's prime attention is focused on the unborn. But we can also say that abortion is no bargain for women, either. It's destructive and tragic. We shouldn't listen unthinkingly to the other side of the time-worn script, the one that tells us that women want abortions, that abortion liberates them. Many a post-abortion woman could tell you a different story.

The pro-life cause is perennially unpopular, and pro-lifers get used to being misrepresented and wrongly accused. There are only a limited number of people who are going to be brave enough to stand up on the side of an unpopular cause. But sometimes a cause is so urgent, is so dramatically clear, that it's worth it. What cause could be more outrageous than violence—fatal violence—against the most helpless members of our human community? If that doesn't move us, how hard are our hearts? If that doesn't move us, what will ever move us?

In time, it's going to be impossible to deny that abortion is violence against children. Future generations, as they look back, are not necessarily going to go easy on ours. Our bland acceptance of abortion is not going to look like an understandable goof. In fact, the kind of hatred that people now level at Nazis and slave-owners may well fall upon our era. Future generations can accurately say, "It's not like they didn't know." They can say, "After all, they had sonograms." They may consider this bloodshed to be a form of genocide. They might judge our generation to be monsters.

One day, the tide is going to turn. With that Supreme Court decision 43 years ago, one of the sides in the abortion debate won the day. But sooner or later, that day will end. No generation can rule from the grave. The time is coming when a younger generation will sit in judgment of ours. And they are not obligated to be kind.

## APPENDIX C

[Robert P. George is the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University. This commentary appeared Jan. 23, 2016, on the Blog page of First Things' website ([www.firstthings.com](http://www.firstthings.com)) and is reprinted with the magazine's permission.]

### **Forty-three Years after *Roe*, Hope Is Alive**

*Robert P. George*

I just noticed that the little reflection I wrote on the anniversary of the tragedy of *Roe v. Wade* has been shared more times than anything else I've ever posted. I am grateful to everyone who shared it. The abortion license is continuing to gnaw at the conscience of our nation, as the Republican Ronald Reagan and the Democrat Robert P. Casey, and the saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, told us it would. At some level most Americans—including those who do not yet dare to acknowledge, even to themselves, the justice of the pro-life cause—know that killing the unborn is not the answer. We must love mother and child equally, limitlessly, and unconditionally, and never pit the alleged good of one against the other.

In 1973, seven supremely fallible men in black robes purported to settle the abortion question. Supporters of the abortion license cheered. Pro-life citizens were, they insisted, “on the wrong side of history.” (Sound familiar?) Legal, publicly funded abortion was, they claimed, “enlightened” policy. It was required for women's equality, reducing the welfare rolls, and “social hygiene.” Resistance was futile. All the young people were for it. Only a few elderly priests and some backwoods fundamentalists were still against it. The priests would soon die out and the “fundamentalists” were already marginal. The churches would get on board—several already were as members of the “Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights”—and stay on board. Soon abortion would be integrated fully into American life and no one who mattered would question it. In a few short years, it would no longer be an issue in American politics and most people would forget that it ever was.

But the pro-life movement kept faith with abortion's tiny victims. In the great civil rights struggle of the post-segregation era, a grassroots movement kept the flame burning and kept hope alive. We refused to abandon the unborn to the “tender mercies”—or women to the ghoulish “compassion”—of the abortionists at Planned Parenthood and the like. We had little support among the wealthy, powerful, and influential. Wall Street hoped we would go away. The media were playing for the other team. The intellectual elites mostly sneered. But janitors and school teachers, factory workers and stay-at-home moms, insurance salesmen and office workers and cashiers at the grocery store, and retired people from all walks of life refused to leave the field. They prayed and protested and counseled on sidewalks in front of the abortion mills. They pounded the marble floors in the legislative chambers. They built pro-life pregnancy centers across the nation to provide material, moral, and spiritual support for our pregnant sisters in need (and so often in fear).

And guess what? Young people came flooding into the movement. Brilliant,

courageous, dedicated, determined young men and women. “I survived *Roe v. Wade*,” they declared, “but *Roe v. Wade* will not survive me.” And they meant—and mean—it.

In the meantime, science marched on, confirming and reconfirming and reconfirming yet again the biological fact of the humanity of the child in the womb. The anti-scientific posturing about the impossibility of knowing “when life begins” became more and more implausible, to the point that it now sounds ridiculous. And that is for the simple reason that it is ridiculous. Serious, intellectually competent defenders of abortion reprimand their fellow abortion supporters for continuing to talk such nonsense. Peter Singer, for example, speaks plainly of abortion as the taking of human life and warns those who try to rest the “pro-choice” case on that denial that they are placing their (and his) cause in jeopardy. The late Ronald Dworkin candidly (and accurately, if chillingly) described abortions as “choices for death.” People like Singer and Dworkin want to build the case for abortion on the idea that no one has dignity or a basic right to life merely on the basis of his or her humanity. Merely to be a human being is not enough. To be a person—a creature with worth and interests that count (Singer) and rights (Dworkin), one must acquire or attain other features or qualities. That is, I believe, bad philosophy—and incompatible with the basic principles of our civilization and polity; but at least it does not rely on denying basic facts known to anyone who has taken the trouble to acquaint himself or herself with modern human embryology and developmental biology.

I believe I know how the story ultimately ends. I’ve had a peek at the last page of the book. But that’s a matter of faith. And I cannot predict where we will go in the short to medium or even medium to long term. Nor do I have any idea how long the “long term” will be. I don’t know how long the little corpses will continue to pile up or the hearts of so many other victims of abortion, including (by their own testimony) many women who have sought or submitted to abortions, will continue to be broken. I do not believe that the future is determined or that history has definite trajectories or “sides.” Truth and justice, however, do have sides—right and wrong sides. And we should deeply care about being on the right side, even in circumstances in which there is little ground for hope of success or victory anytime soon. But when it comes to protecting unborn babies and their mothers, we are, thank God, not in such circumstances. Evidence is everywhere that our prayers and efforts are availing. Hearts are turning. Young and old are gaining strength, confidence, and courage. They are committing to the cause, deepening their commitment to the cause, finding their voices.

We shall overcome.

## APPENDIX D

*[Brantly C. Millegan is the Founder and Editor of ChurchPOP.com and a Moral Theology Ph.D. student at Catholic University of America. The following story is reprinted from ChurchPOP.com with permission. ChurchPOP is a website for Catholic culture.]*

### **The Inside Story on the Turnpike Mass, From the Priest Who Led It**

*Brantly C. Millegan*

You've probably heard the basic story by now: buses full of students heading home from the March for Life in Washington D.C. got stuck on a highway because of a blizzard, and while they were waiting they constructed an altar out of snow and held Mass on the side of the highway. Amazing!

ChurchPOP tracked down the priest who presided over this historic Mass, Fr. Patrick Behm, and interviewed him about his experience.

"It was incredible," Fr. Behm told ChurchPOP, "easily one of the highlights of my time as a priest."

Fr. Behm is the parochial vicar of All Saints' Parish in Le Mars, IA as well as parochial vicar of St. Patrick's Parish in Akron, IA, and the chaplain of Gehlen Catholic High School in Le Mars. He was chaperoning five students from the high school.

According to Fr. Behm, his group plus several other big groups from other schools got stuck near the mile marker 133 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. They were there for approximately 22 hours!

The cause of the jam, Fr. Behm was told, was an accident involving two tractor-trailers that blocked all of the westbound lanes of traffic. In the time it took to clear this accident, the snow in turn rendered the road impassible and the vehicles immobile.

He couldn't claim credit for the idea of having Mass: "I was the principal celebrant of the liturgy," he said, "but credit for the idea, and credit for building the altar, and credit for going around to the various buses inviting people to join them belongs completely to the pilgrims from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, particularly Mr. Bill Dill, their youth minister."

It was those students from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis who built the snow altar: "Those Minnesotans apparently know how to build stuff out of snow!"

The now famous Mass was a powerful spiritual experience for Fr. Behm and everyone else involved.

"It left me with many impressions, but among them was the fact that Jesus enters into the storm. Jesus comes to us, in the storms of our life, and enters in to be with us. He desires to be with His people, and if we respond to this invitation to let Him in, then the message is profound hope and joy."

Fr. Behm praised everyone for responding positively to such a hard situation: "Everyone on that turnpike had a choice: to respond with joy and a positive outlook,

or to respond with negativity and anger. Neither approach would have gotten us out of there any faster. But, one approach at least made the waiting more bearable and tolerable.”

Further, he saw God reap spiritual fruit from the event: “God, in His providence, used this event to share the Gospel with scores of people who may never hear the Good News.”

Lastly, he wanted to express an immense gratitude to all the workers who helped them: “the Pennsylvania National Guard, the Highway Patrol, the Pennsylvania DOT, local law enforcement, and the local fire department. It was a massive undertaking, and these first responders did a remarkable job.”

Here’s our full interview:

Q: Have you ever done this before? How did you get the idea to build a snow altar and have Mass outside on the side of the highway?

No. This was definitely a first for me. And, it wasn’t my idea at all.

I’m kind of being attached to this story, as I was the principal celebrant of the liturgy, but credit for the idea, and credit for building the altar, and credit for going around to the various buses inviting people to join them belongs completely to the pilgrims from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, particularly Mr. Bill Dill, their youth minister.

Q: Who built the altar? Was it just snow?

Pilgrims from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. And yes, it was completely made out of snow. Those Minnesotans apparently know how to build stuff out of snow!

Q: Did only people from your group participate in the Mass, or did other people stuck on the turnpike also participate?

It was far more than our group. The groups that I know were in attendance were from Dioceses from Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. In addition, there may have been others who got out of their vehicles and joined us. I’m not sure about that though.

Q: How many people participated approximately?

The number I’m being told is approximately 500.

Q: Do you have any stories about how this positively affected people spiritually?

Overall, I’d say it certainly raised the spirits of all those in attendance. It brought the light of Christ to a very bleak situation, and helped continue to spread the message of the Gospel of Life, that all life is sacred.

Q: What was it like? What impression did the event leave you with?

It was incredible . . . easily one of the highlights of my time as a priest. It left me with many impressions, but among them was the fact that Jesus enters into the storm. Jesus comes to us, in the storms of our life, and enters in to be with us. He desires to be with His people, and if we respond to this invitation to let Him in, then the message is profound hope and joy.

Everyone on that turnpike had a choice: to respond with joy and a positive outlook, or to respond with negativity and anger. Neither approach would have

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gotten us out of there any faster. But, one approach at least made the waiting more bearable and tolerable.

Q: What's been your reaction to the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the event on social media?

I'm stunned, actually. I've been trying to deflect credit and praise away from myself and on those who truly deserve it, Mr. Dill and the ASPM pilgrims. I never would have envisioned that it would receive the type of coverage it has.

But, God, in His providence, used this event to share the Gospel with scores of people who may never hear the Good News.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share about it?

Just to thank people for their prayers, and to thank everyone who helped us: the Pennsylvania National Guard, the Highway Patrol, the Pennsylvania DOT, local law enforcement, and the local fire department. It was a massive undertaking, and these first responders did a remarkable job.



*(See more photographs of the Turnpike Mass at [www.ChurchPop.com](http://www.ChurchPop.com))*

## APPENDIX E

[*Charles Camosy is Associate Professor of Theological and Social Ethics at Fordham University and a board member of Democrats for Life. The following column ran in the Dallas Morning News on Jan. 29, 2016, and is reprinted with Mr. Camosy's permission.*]

### **Sanders, Clinton Haven't Been Asked About Abortion, Not a Single Time**

*Charles Camosy*

Quick, what issue has most passionately divided Americans over the past four decades?

If you said anything other than “abortion,” you are mistaken. Ideas like same-sex marriage have gone from unthinkable to everywhere, but disagreement over abortion remains as hot as ever.

Multiple news cycles have been dominated by everything from the Planned Parenthood videos, whether and how religious institutions refuse to pay for abortion-inducing drugs and attempts to limit abortions beyond 20 weeks. In less than two months, there will be oral arguments in the first major Supreme Court case on abortion in nearly a decade, and once again the country will engage in heated argument.

The next president of the United States, in addition to having all-important veto power, will likely appoint up to four Supreme Court justices. So, what do we know about the 2016 candidates on abortion?

Republicans have been asked about this from their very first debate, but even after six debates, moderators haven't asked the Democrats even a single question about abortion policy.

Not a single question.

Now, you might say, “What's the big deal? We know Democrats are pro-choice. Asking what they think about abortion would be a waste of time.”

But this is a huge mistake. About 21 million registered Democrats identify as pro-life — and they are disproportionately represented in blue-dog, heartland states like Iowa. And even if someone identifies as pro-choice, it just isn't clear what they think about specific abortion policies.

A Marist poll released last week found that two-thirds of those who self-identify as pro-choice say abortion should be allowed, at most, in the first trimester or only in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother. More than half the country identifies as pro-choice, but Gallup finds only about a quarter of Americans say abortion should be legal beyond 12 weeks. There is also tremendous support among pro-choicers for not forcing pro-lifers to pay for abortion with their tax dollars — something President Obama supported via executive order in 2010.

All of this diversity of opinion, by itself, would be enough to make it seem strange that Democratic candidates haven't been asked about abortion.

But also consider this: Not least because anti-abortion groups have worked to defeat pro-life Democrats, effectively handing the party over to the agenda of

## APPENDIX E

abortion-rights groups, Democratic national candidates have been pushed way out of the American mainstream.

For instance, in her 2008 run for the presidency, Hillary Clinton insisted abortion should be rare. “And by rare, I mean rare,” she said.

But in 2016 the enforcers of abortion-rights orthodoxy don’t permit positions that risk implying abortion is a bad thing and ought to be limited. The “1 in 3” and #ShoutYourAbortion campaigns insist abortion is a social good to be promoted, not a tragic thing to be limited.

Bernie Sanders has a long-standing 100-percent rating with abortion-rights groups, and thus was already in line with this approach. Clinton has not only been forced to abandon the idea that abortion should be rare, she now says pro-lifers ought to pay for abortion-on-demand with their tax dollars.

It is a debate moderator’s job to probe a candidate’s position, especially a position on a polarized issue that divides the electorate, and especially when their position is at odds with what the electorate believes. As the poll numbers above demonstrate, the new abortion-rights orthodoxy is so far out of the mainstream as to be ridiculous. Even a clear majority of registered Democrats reject it.

That Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders have not been confronted on their extremism on abortion is a very serious abdication of journalistic responsibility. Let us hope future moderators of Democratic debates will give due attention to the most polarizing issue of our time.

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“In the same way that contemporary societies never leave off marveling at how a seemingly civilized nation could have enslaved a race, or murdered a religion—we will never leave off turning over and over in our heads the fact of an abortion clinic near a supermarket near an apartment building near a hospital where they save prematurely born babies.”

—*Helen Alvaré, “How Goes the Movement for Life?”*